206-0.3 Hq, VI corps - After Action Report 1-31 January 1945

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Hq, VI Corps - After Action Report

VI CORPS HISTORY

JANUARY - 1945

Index Page #64

Unit Narrative

original

Annexes 8 11 under separate

cover.

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HEADQUARTERS VI CORPS
APO #46, U. S. Army

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SUBJECT: Historical Record, Headquarters VI Corps, January 1945.

TO : The Adjutant General, Washington, 25, D. C. (Through Channels).

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INTRODUCTION

1. The month of January 1945 saw VI Corps on the defensive for the first time in almost a year - faced by the greatest concentration of German troops since the ANZIO Beachhead in Italy during the early months of 1944. During the course of their powerful attempts to break through the VI Corps line in three places and retake ALSACE and the political prize of STRASBOURG, the enemy forces of the XXXIX and the XXIX SS Corps - reputedly under the personal command of HEINRICH HIMMLER - employed twelve divisions including three units considered among the elite of the German Army - the 6 SS Mtn, 7 Paratroop and 10 SS Panzer Divisions.

2. As the month opened, VI Corps on the right flank of Seventh Army held most of the northern section of ALSACE above STRASBOURG. Along the northern flank, Task Force HUDELSON (117th and 94th Cav Rcn Sqns and 62d AIB) and the 45th and 79th Infantry Divisions held the line running from a mile South of BITCHE, East to DAMBACH, Northeast across the German border to SCHONAU and NIEDERSCHLETTENBACH, Southeast to the border about two miles East of WISSEMBOURG and then East along the border to the RHINE River. The RHINE front from the border to just South of STRASBOURG was held by Task Forces HERREN and LINDEN (infantry elements of the 70th and 42d Infantry Divisions). The XV U. S. Corps was on the left flank and II Corps of the First French Army on the right.

3. The New Year was hardly two hours old before the enemy 256 and 361 VG Divisions attacked Southeast from BITCHE to drive a salient into the Corps left flank. These forces were quickly supplemented by the 257 VG and the fanatical 6 SS Mtn Divisions and a wedge driven as far South as REIPERTSWILLER before it had been contained by the 45th Division. In view of the fluid situation along the entire Western Front and the increasing pressure in this sector, higher headquarters directed an immediate withdrawal by VI Corps to the eastern fringe of the VOSGES Mountains. However, after this retrograde movement had been superbly planned by the Corps Staff and the first step smoothly executed by the Corps' divisions in their withdrawal to the MAGINOT Line during the night 2-3 January, the withdrawal was halted and a holding action along this new MLR directed by higher headquarters.

4. By 7 January, the enemy build-up on the northeastern flank culminated in an offensive by the 21 Panzer Division which broke through the MLR between STUNDWILLER and BUHL and continued on to HATTEN and RITTERSHOFFEN. Both the 25 PG Division and elements of the 7 Paratroop Division joined this attack which had been contained and driven back by counterattacks by 16 January. However, after the 10 SS Panzer Division and the bulk of the 7 Paratroop Division appeared in the SESSENHEIM - ROHRWILLER area on 17-18 January to augment the hostile forces of the 553 VG Division which had made a bridgehead West of the RHINE in the GAMBSHEIM area on 5 January, and a powerful westward attack towards HAGUENAU appeared imminent, VI Corps effected a smooth withdrawal on 20-21 January to the MODER River Line where it could better regroup and organize a substantial reserve to repulse the continuing enemy offensive.

5. The expected all-out assault took place on 24-25 January when the 6 SS Mtn Division broke through the 103d Division MLR to reach SCHILLERSDORF, the 25 Panzer, 7 Paratroop and 47 VG Divisions crossed the MODER River West of HAGUENAU to penetrate 79th Division positions in the BOIS DE OHLUNGEN between NEUBOURG and SCHWEIGHAUSEN and the 10 SS Panzer Division attacked across the MODER at KALTENHAUSEN against the right flank of the 79th Division. By evening of 25 January, all these assaults had been contained and the hostile forces driven back across the MLR by our counterattacks which inflicted such heavy casualties that the enemy gave up his ideas of continuing the offensive.

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1 January

1. The New Year had scarcely begun when the enemy launched a powerful attack against the Corps west flank positions in the BITCHE (Q-7750) - BANNSTEIN (Q-8345) sector and succeeded in overrunning Task Force HUDELSON positions, the momentum of their drive carrying them South to the vicinity of Q-8142 by the close of the period. The heavy fighting which developed in the area southeast of BITCHE by daylight had spread across the front as far East as OBERSTEINBACH (Q-9548), but attempts to infiltrate East of NEUNHOFFEN (Q-9146) were repulsed by elements of the 45th Division, thus confining the main force of the enemy effort West of the 92 Easting. The initial hostile successes were achieved by infiltration in force in this heavily wooded, mountainous area, the main effort being made by the 256 VG Division although there were indications that the 559 VG Division was operating along the boundary between VI and XV Corps. Considerable regrouping and shifting of units from other sectors of the Corps front to this threatened area took place during the day to block the apparently imminent major German offensive.

2. a. The gradual acceleration of enemy patrolling over the previous several days on the Corps left flank reached its climax in the early hours of the New Year when hostile attacks developed throughout the sector of Task Force HUDELSON at 0230A with the main pressure on the left flank against the 117th Cav Rcn Sqdn and the 94th Cav Rcn Sqdn in the MOUTERHOUSE (Q-7942) - BANNSTEIN (Q-8345) area. The enemy offensive took the form of a two pronged drive to the Southeast without mortar or artillery preparation, the main drive being made by the right column although constant heavy pressure was maintained to the East. Strong enemy infiltrations continued throughout the period in this area. Following the initial impact of this drive, the fighting subsided somewhat, but shortly after daybreak the enemy launched a strong attack in the vicinity of BANNSTEIN which ultimately breached positions in this area. An estimated two-company attack further East in the vicinity of Q-8804060 was repulsed at 0630A. The situation on the west flank became quite obscure and communications with the 117th Cav were maintained only with the greatest difficulty, the enemy having overrun their positions in the early stages of the offensive.

b. To meet this emergency, the 19th Armd Inf Bn and another medium Tk Co of the 25 Tk Bn - both of the 14th Armd Division - had been moved to this area before noon and attached to Task Force HUDELSON. By midday, enemy troops had reached the outskirts of BAERENTHAL (Q-8442) to place Task Force HUDELSON CP under small arms fire and necessitate a withdrawal under cover of a perimeter defense set up by elements of the 25th Tk Bn which repulsed the onslaught temporarily. The enemy continued to send strong infantry columns southward. Between 1100A and 1500A an estimated regiment was reported marching South along the road near Q-854455; at 1515A an air OP observed an estimated 500 enemy moving Southwest at Q-813427 and about the same time an enemy patrol was reported at Q-805405, about two miles North of REIPERTSWILLER (Q-8037) where the new Task Force CP was located. Before the close of the period a battalion of the 313th Inf (79th Div) had moved in North of REIPERTSWILLER to block further advances in that zone and a battalion of the 275th Inf (atchd to 45th Div) was in position Southeast of BAERENTHAL to block that axis, while the rest of the regiment was further to the Southeast in the NIEDERBRONN area 1/.

3. In view of the threatened breakthrough in the Task Force HUDELSON sector, Combat Command "B" 14th Armd Division - in reserve near BOUXWILLER -

1/. G-2 Rpt No. 140, G-3 Rpt No. 2 - 2 Jan; WRJ, 1 Jan - Entries #5, 9, 10, 13, 17, 40, 104 and 139.

(Note - Daily G-2 and G-3 Rpts are used as references for periods they cover, and will not be indicated in future paragraphs).

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was preparing to stem the tide. In addition to those elements which had been attached to the Task Force, the 47th Tk Bn and the 25th Tk Bn (-), reinforced by the 125th Armd Engr Bn, established road blocks to the Northwest in the wooded mountain passes along the line NEUWILLER (Q-7525) - INGWILLER (Q-8130) - ROTHBACH (Q-8534) - ZINSWILLER (Q-8925) - NIEDERBRONN (Q-9338) behind the threatened zone. CC "A" assembled late in the period and started moving from the XV Corps sector to BOUXWILLER 2/.

4. a. The 45th Division forward positions remained static except on the left flank where the 157th Inf engaged the left hinge of the enemy attack which was overrunning the Task Force HUDELSON positions. However, the rest of the division had a busy day regrouping its organic forces and the numerous newly-attached infantry elements to swing its power into the path of the German attack to the West. Following aggressive patrol activities in the NEUHOFFEN - DAMBACH (Q-9244) area, the enemy launched a battalion attack against positions of the 157th Inf at Q-9146 shortly before daybreak, but this assault was repulsed without loss of ground, artillery inflicting severe casualties on the enemy. Prisoners taken in this engagement indicated the attack was just a prelude to the main effort which was scheduled to begin at noon, and the subsequent build-up seemed to substantiate these claims. Shortly after 0800A, a column of 200 enemy infantry was observed moving Southeast at Q-912470 and at the same time seventeen horse-drawn carts entered the woods at Q-915467. However fighter bombers covered NEUHOFFEN with bombs and by 1430A, 300-400 hostile personnel were observed withdrawing to the Northwest from the town. Further attempts at infiltration in force between PHILIPPSBOURG (Q-875425) and OBERSTEINBACH (Q-960485) were repulsed with the enemy suffering heavy casualties.

b. Both the 179th and 180th Infs held their positions along the divisional front until the former was relieved by the 36th Engr C Regt and moved to LEMBACH (R-0445), preparatory to moving to a forward assembly area North of WINGEN (Q-7335) during the night to get into the path of the German effort. The 275th Inf (Task Force HERREN) had assembled near NIEDERBRONN early in the morning, attached to the division and by late afternoon, the 313th Inf (-3d Bn) and the 1st Bns 314th and 315th Infs (all of the 79th Div) had been attached to the 45th Division, and one battalion of the 313th committed against the hostile advance North of REIPERTSWILLER 3/.

5. The 79th Division sector was generally quiet. The major activity taking place was the movement of certain divisional units necessitated by the enemy thrust Southeast of BITCHE. The 313th Inf (-3d Bn) plus the 1st Bns of 314th and 315th Infs passed to the control of the 45th Division. Task Force HERREN (-275th Inf) was attached to 79th Division in positions already held at 1800A; the 93d and 69th Armd FA Bns were also attached to the 79th Division during the day. Enemy activity was negligible except for occasional patrol contacts and sporadic artillery fire in various sectors of the Division zone, notably in the WISSEMBOURG (R-1543) area. Small groups of German troops were observed at R-210525 and R-226528 and fired upon by artillery with good results 4/.

6. There was very little activity in Task Force HERREN Zone. Efforts to locate the paratroopers who were reported in the area the previous evening were fruitless. The 275th Inf closed in the 45th Division zone at 0630A, attached on arrival. The 274th Inf completed relief of the 276th Inf which

2/. WRJ, 1 Jan - Entries #155 and 211.

3/. WRJ, 1 Jan - Entries #47, 75, 121, 128, 163, 186 and 213.

4/. WRJ, 1 Jan - Entries #92, 128 and 186.

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NARA Date 4/

closed in assembly area at CAMP D'OBERHOFFEN (R-0821) at 1530A in Corps reserve. At 1800A Task Force HERREN (-) was attached to the 79th Division 5/.

7. Task Force LINDEN area along the RHINE continued quiet throughout the period, except for small arms and machine gun fire during the afternoon from East of the RHINE. However, a man identified by the FFI as a German paratrooper was captured in GAMBSHEIM (R-1010). Along the RHINE, South of STRASBOURG (R-0198), the 222d Inf relieved the 242d Inf in position by 1900A 6/.

8. A total of eleven missions of 125 sorties were flown in close support of VI Corps by XII TAC, primarily directed against targets in the 45th Division and Task Force HUDELSON sectors. At 0858A, several Me-109s and one JU-88 entered the Corps area and strafed 79th Division front line units. These aircraft were engaged by heavy and light AA and the JU-88 was shot down, crashing in the vicinity of R-232360. At 1700A, two Me-109s were seen over MOUTERHOUSE on a reconnaissance mission and at 1530A, four FW-190s, also on reconnaissance were engaged in the vicinity of NIEDERSOULTZBACH (Q-8027) 7/.

9. In accordance with orders from higher authority, the Seventh Army Commander verbally directed the Corps Commander to effect an immediate withdrawal of his troops to positions along the eastern fringe of the VOSGES Mountains in sector, and the Corps Commander outlined the plan to his division commanders in an afternoon conference.

2 January

1. Strong enemy attacks were resumed throughout 2 January, the main effort continuing on the left flank of Corps zone in the Task Force HUDELSON sector which had come under the command of the 45th Division. These strong enemy attacks, supported by considerable armor, were brought under control and contained by the end of the period when counterattacks by the 179th Inf (-), the 313th Inf (-) and the 275th Inf made minor gains after heavy fighting. The enemy assault, although it lacked the coordination of a full scale offensive, appeared to be a major effort after identification of elements of the 6 SS Mtn Div. Enemy air activity for the period was quite heavy and consisted chiefly of strafing and reconnaissance missions. The withdrawal to the MAGINOT positions in the center and right of the Corps zone commenced as scheduled toward the close of the period. Enemy ground activity in the RHINE River area was negligible.

2. a. Enemy pressure continued strong throughout the day on the west flank of the 45th Division, in the former Task Force HUDELSON sector. On the center and the right flank there was no change in the positions of the 157th and 180th Infs or in the 36th Engr C Regt sector until after dark when elements of these three units started their withdrawal to the MAGINOT positions in accordance with Operations Instruction No. 1 which had been issued at 1100A. The 179th Inf moved by motor to the Corps left flank near WINGEN and at 1100A attacked Northwest and made some slight progress. By the close of the period the Regiment held a line just South of the road block at Road Junction Q-725398 - Northeast to Q-742420, one kilometer South of MEISENTHAL (Q-7241) to Q-755387. In the course of the afternoon the enemy maintained his pressure by launching a company-sized attack driving Southwest from Q-750425 towards SARREINSBERG (Q-7441). This attack gained no ground but the enemy succeeded in infiltrating to the vicinity of Q-725398 where he set up a strongly defended road block supported by two tanks which cut the road between two 179th battalions. In the REIPERTSWILLER - WILDENGUTH (Q-7938) area, the attached 313th Inf (-) engaged

5/. WRJ, 1 Jan - Entries #42 and 102.

6/. WRJ, 1 Jan - Entries #96 and 186.

7/. WRJ, 1 Jan - Entry #140.

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Author 73017
By NARA Date 4

enemy troops and tanks moving into REIPERTSWILLER where heavy pressure developed during the course of the day. In the morning the enemy pushed a two-company attack from the North along two parallel roads leading into REIPERTSWILLER at Q-801371 and Q-789380. The attack was stopped by elements of the 313th pushing up the same road as far as the 39 Northing. At 1300A an estimated company of enemy attacked a road block of the 313th Inf at WILDENGUTH and were repulsed, but later in the period the enemy infiltrated back into the town and vicinity. Late in the period the 1st Bn 314th Inf, which had joined the 313th Inf (-), mopped up enemy resistance in the REIPERTSWILLER area.

b. Along the 275th Inf sector extending from BAERENTHAL - DAMBACH - NEUNHOFFEN, the enemy continued to exert strong pressure during the night. Early in the morning, a small enemy group attempted to infiltrate vicinity Q-932461 and a 15-man enemy patrol was repulsed in the same area a short time later. In the course of the morning the enemy also launched a two-company attack from the vicinity Q-8744 which continued throughout the morning and forced some withdrawal. Southeast of BAERENTHAL the enemy exerted strong pressure along the road, launching two attacks by an estimated 200-300 enemy supported by armor. These attacks were contained but close contact and heavy pressure continued throughout the period. Only light resistance however, was offered to 275th Inf troops advancing along the road Northwest out of PHILIPPSBOURG. By 1630A the 275th Inf held a line from points just Southwest and Southeast of BAERENTHAL running Northeast to the vicinity of Q-896446. A battalion and a half were located astride the road leading from BANNSTEIN to NIEDERBRONN 8/.

3. The 79th Division sector was generally quiet during this period except for occasional patrol activity and light artillery fire received in the WISSEMBOURG and BERG (R-0442) areas. There was a regrouping of troop units due to the departure of several battalions to the Corps left flank; the 1st Bn of 314th Inf and the 1st Bn of 315th Inf moved at 0055A by motor transport for attachment to 45th Division. At 0615A a 10-12 man enemy patrol which had crossed the river was contacted near BERG - a wounded PW from this group stating he was from the 435 VG Division. In the course of the afternoon there was little or no enemy activity in the 79th Division sector. The 315th Inf (-1st Bn), the 314th Inf (-1st Bn) and the 3d Bn 313th Inf started moving from present positions at 2000A to new positions on MAGINOT Line MLRs, leaving a rear guard at present positions to start movement at 030400A. Task Force LINDEN was attached to 79th Division at 1100A 9/.

4. The 14th Armd Division continued its reconnaissance missions in the west flank sector North and West of REIPERTSWILLER. At 1030A, 25 to 30 enemy tanks were reported in the vicinity of WILDENGUTH. Other elements of the 14th Armd Division were engaged in blocking pass roads leading South in the REIPERTSWILLER area. The 25th and 47th Tk Bns continued to block the passes in the INGWILLER - NIEDERBRONN area. Component units of Task Force HUDELSON reverted to control of the Division and the 117th Cav Rcn Sqdn was attached and then withdrawn later for reorganization. CC "A" closed in assembly area and reverted to control of the Division 10/.

5. The RHINE River sector under Task Force LINDEN remained quiet. No enemy activity was reported except for two unidentified planes which came in

8/. WRJ, 2 Jan - Entries #12 and 17 (MORSBRONN CP); #10, 13, 39 and 40 (DETTWILLER CP); OI No. 1 - Annex No. 7.

9/. WRJ, 2 Jan - Entries #2 and 18 (MORSBRONN CP); VI Corps OI No. 1; Annex No. 9

10/. WRJ, 2 Jan - Entries #32 (MORSBRONN CP) and 59 (DETTWILLER CP).

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By NARA, Date 4

from the Southeast, circled over R-134056, then left. The 3d Bn of 232d Inf extended its line to relieve 1st Bn elements which moved to REICHSTETT (R-0105) as regimental reserve. The 222d Inf completed relief of 242d Inf and began movement to occupy defensive positions along the general line V-8592- V-8589- OBERNAI (V-8184) at the close of the period. Task Force LINDEN was attached to 79th Division at 1100A 11/.

6. A total of ten missions involving 108 sorties were flown in close support of VI Corps by the XII TAC with priority to the 45th Division targets. Thirty-six enemy aircraft were over VI Corps area between 1000A and 1200A on reconnaissance and strafing missions in support of hostile forward units. Four engagements were reported by the 35th Brig during the period, one hostile aircraft being destroyed and another probably destroyed.

7. At 1100A Operations Instruction No. 1 had been issued directing the 45th and 79th Divisions to withdraw to the MAGINOT Line positions by daylight of 3 January, and to withdraw to successive lines on Corps order and to continue organization of VOSGES positions with utmost speed; and also directing the 45th Division to attack early on this date to restore the BITCHE - NIEDERBRONN position 12/.

8. The VI Corps CP closed at MORSBRONN (R-003332) and opened at DETTWILLER (Q-8017) at 1200A.

3 January

1. The strong threat to the Corps left flank positions remained throughout 3 January as the enemy continued to exert pressure in his salient through the SARREINSBERG (Q-740418) - BAERENTHAL line, towards REIPERTSWILLER and WIMMENAU, and increased his build-up in the PHILIPPSBOURG area. Intelligence that the 21 Panzer Division had joined the 6 SS Mtn Division as another spearhead of this thrust in which elements of the 361 and 257 VG Divisions had already been identified indicated a major offensive was imminent. By late afternoon orders from Seventh Army still indicated a continuation of the withdrawal to the MODER River and VOSGES positions, but a telephone call from the Army Commander to the Corps Commander just before dark directed holding action on the MAGINOT positions presently held, and a cessation of the withdrawal 13/.

2. a. Despite the increased hostile pressure there were only minor changes on the left flank front of the 45th Division which continued to be the center of activity in the Corps zone. The brunt of the attack was borne by the 179th Inf on the left, holding the line from SARREINSBERG to points South, near WINGEN, by the 313th Inf (-) in the REIPERTSWILLER area, and by the 275th Inf on the right in the vicinity of PHILIPPSBOURG. On the extreme left flank, one small group had infiltrated before daylight and set up a road block at Q-726398, South of MEISENTHAL (Q-7140), but the main enemy effort on the SARREINSBERG - MEISENTHAL axis did not develop until daylight when it met head-on the counter-attack of the 179th Inf. Only minor changes in the line were made during the day of heavy fighting in which elements of the 466 and 457 PGRs of the 21 Panzer Division were identified. According to prisoners taken from these units, they had

11/. WRJ, 2 Jan - Entry #32 (DETTWILLER CP).

12/. Annex No. 7.

13/. WRJ, 3 Jan - Entries #58 and 62.

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the mission of seizing MEISENTHAL and then flanking to the Northwest. Heaviest pressure employed in the salient continued in the center where the enemy continued to employ a considerable portion of the 361 VG Division against the 313th Inf (-) in an effort to capture REIPERTSWILLER. In this zone, one attack came along the road leading South into REIPERTSWILLER; another was launched from the Northwest; and a third was made due West in an attempt to dislodge 313th elements in WILDENGUTH (Q-737377). A small group of enemy managed to infiltrate South of the town and took up positions on the high ground Southwest of REIPERTSWILLER, but in general these attacks were contained and at the close of the period the enemy was observed digging in on the high ground North of REIPERTSWILLER.

b. The hostile offensive on the eastern shoulder of the salient - the BAERENTHAL - PHILIPPSBOURG area - was led by the 476 PGR in the early afternoon. This attack overran some forward positions of the 275th Inf and a few snipers and two or three tanks had reached PHILIPPSBOURG late in the evening when this inexperienced regiment was heavily engaged in the northern end of the town. Meanwhile, only light contact had been maintained on the rest of the long Division front. The 157th and 180th Inf's and the 36th Engr C Regt had completed withdrawals to MAGINOT Line positions without incident before daylight. The 157th held positions along the line Q-922445 - Q-940432 - Q-949433 - Q-974442 with one battalion assembled in reserve at NIEDERBRONN; the 180th Inf held the line Q-976441 - R-042450 until relieved by the 36th Engrs and 315th Inf elements; and the 36th Engr C Regt held the line R-043447 - R-100440. After completion of its relief, the 180th Inf began movement to an assembly area near WIMMENAU (Q-7634) in the threatened zone 14/.

3. Contact along the 79th Division front was slight during the period as a successful withdrawal was made to MAGINOT Line positions. The 315th Inf (-), 314th Inf (-) and the 3d Bn 313th Inf, less rear guard elements, had completed withdrawal to positions along the MAGINOT Line by 022400A and screening forces had also closed in MAGINOT Line positions by 1630A after blowing all bridges over the LAUTER River before 0530A. Task Force HERREN, less a rear guard, closed on MLR No. 2 at 0330A while the 1st Bn 232d Inf (Task Force LINDEN) relieved the 2d and 3d Bns 274th Inf on MAGINOT Line and RHINE River positions. The remainder of the regiment maintained defensive positions along the RHINE River. The 242d Inf continued to maintain defensive positions along the general line V-8592 - V-8589 - OBERNAI (V-8184) and was alerted for movement to BRUMATH (R-9714) the next morning. The 79th Cav Rcn Tr relieved remaining elements of 274th Inf along the RHINE River between SESSENHEIM (R-1822) and OFFENDORF (R-1312). The enemy followed up these withdrawals only with increased patrols. At 1000A, two enemy soldiers were seen in WISSEMBOURG in the vicinity of the bridge site at R-158486 and at 1500A a 12-man patrol was observed moving Northwest on the road from MOMMERN (R-3037) to NEEWILLER (R-2839) and fired on by our TDs with good results. The Task Force LINDEN sector continued very quiet but the civilian populace of STRASBOURG was reported showing grave concern over the possible withdrawal of Allied military personnel - some evacuation having already taken place 15/.

4. The 14th Armd Division continued its mission of blocking the mountain passes in the INGWILLER - WIMMENAU - WINGEN area, with elements of the 25th and 47th Tk Bns. The 19th Armd Inf Bn (-), Cos A of the 25th and 47th Tk Bns

14/. WRJ, 3 Jan - Entries #35, 39, 41, 43, 52, 73 and 121.

15/. WRJ, 3 Jan - Entries #13 and 94.

SECRET

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Authority 73517
By NARA Date 4

and Tr C 117th Cav Rcn Sqdn were attached to the 45th Division as 94th Cav elements patrolled the INGWILLER - WIMMENAU road to MEISENTHAL. Late in the period the 117th Cav (-) was detached and moved to RINGENDORF (Q-8723) for reorganization and refitting 16/.

6. In accordance with the revised orders from higher authority which had directed cessation of the withdrawal to the VOSGES positions and holding action along the present line, Operations Instruction No. 3 was issued at 2100A directing that the Corps defend along the MAGINOT positions, although continued reconnaissance of the intermediate and revised VOSGES positions would be initiated without delay. O.I. No. 3 also attached Task Force HERREN, with supporting tank and artillery units, to the 45th Division, upon occupation of the line VOLKSBERG - RJ (Q-790335), and directed the 132d and 155th FA Bns, 753d Tk Bn and Co C 636th TD Bn to move without delay to the XV Corps zone 17/.

4 January

1. The principal activity along the Corps front continued in the BITCHE salient during 4 January, although enemy forces showed increased aggressiveness on the right flank as small groups reconnoitered the area just vacated by the 79th Division in its withdrawal to the MAGINOT Line positions. No major enemy offensive had developed inthis salient which extended down to REIPERTSWILLER, but probing patrols continued their aggressive efforts to find soft spots in the front line positions of the 45th Division and one sizeable group had infiltrated to the Southwest into WINGEN. The enemy employed 15-20 tanks in the salient area in support of his several strong local attacks.

2. a. In this threatened area, the 45th Division continued its efforts to reduce the enemy salient. The 179th Inf retained its positions on the left flank near SARREINSBERG throughout the day, improving defenses and communications, and at 1810A attacked to the East to clear the enemy from the towns of MEISENTHAL and SOUCHT (Q-7140) against continued stiff resistance. To their immediate South, the 276th Inf, which had just moved into the WINGEN area, attacked the town from the West shortly before noon to clear the estimated 200 enemy troops who had infiltrated during the night. By 2130A, elements were on the outskirts of WINGEN and were still heavily engaged with the enemy at the close of the period.

b. After assembling at Q-7434 during the night, the 180th Inf attacked North across the WINGEN - WIMMENAU road at 1000A to clear the area West and Southwest of REIPERTSWILLER, and by the end of the period had established a line Q-760378 - Q-770370 - Q-780360 against strong resistance. Apparently as the result of this attack, the heavy pressure in the REIPERTSWILLER area decreased noticeably in the late afternoon enabling the 313th Inf (-) to straighten its lines and consolidate its positions in REIPERTSWILLER. With the 1st Bn 314th Inf attached, the 313th Inf remained in heavy contact throughout the day and suffered severe casualties but made considerable progress to clear the road between REIPERTSWILLER and WILDENGUTH. After several unsuccessful attempts to reestablish contact with elements cut off in the latter town, the 313th Inf finally reached the town to get supplies to those troops, but in the center the 1st Bn 314th was still heavily engaged in SAEGMUHL (Q-7937) at the end of the

16/. O.I. No. 3 - Annex No. 7.

17/. Annex No. 7.

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period. Small groups of enemy continued to hold the high ground North and West of REIPERTSWILLER, however, and were digging in.

c. On the east shoulder of the hostile salient, the 275th Inf made considerable progress in the PHILIPPSBOURG area in its efforts to reorganize and straighten its line. Elements had reached the southern outskirts of the town early in the morning, and by noon the entire town had been cleared of the enemy; positions and communications - so badly disorganized during the previous day - had been reestablished. However, efforts to extend the line to the Northwest met stubborn opposition and heavy fighting was going on in the outskirts of the town, forward elements receiving heavy concentrations of hostile mortar and artillery fire. Other 275th elements to the West poured strong fire on the enemy in BAERENTHAL but made little progress towards the town. Heavy enemy infiltration continued in this area, one 30-man patrol being contacted in the vicinity of Q-845380.

d. There was little more than extensive patrol activity on the rest of the long 45th Division front, held by the 157th Inf (with 1st Bn 315th Inf atchd) and the 36th Engr C Regt, except in the vicinity of DAMBACH where a considerable hostile build-up continued. About 1130A elements of the 157th had a sharp fire fight with an enemy patrol North of DAMBACH and at 1700A armored vehicles were heard in the same vicinity. Later in the evening an estimated four tanks and 20mm weapons fired on positions of the 157th Inf from this same area to force a withdrawal from the town by 2240A 18/.

3. The 79th Division sector continued quiet during the period except for light enemy contact made by patrols working well forward of main positions. Along the RHINE River front the Task Force LINDEN regrouped its units to take over the defense of the river line. The 242d Inf began movement to the BRUMATH area but then continued North and began the relief of the 314th Inf (-1st Bn) in position on the right flank of the division zone. The 1st Bn of the 232d Inf extended its positions to the South to include those of the 79th Cav Rcn Troop. The positions on the island at STRASBOURG in the vicinity of W-0497 were taken over by elements of the 222d Inf. Small enemy groups were reported active in the area South of WISSEMBOURG apparently feeling out the depth of our voluntary withdrawal to the MAGINOT Line positions. During the morning, patrols of the 315th Inf (-) contacted enemy outposts at R-154457 and at R-160463 where artillery fire was subsequently concentrated. At 1427A, the 3d Bn 313th Inf engaged an enemy patrol in a fire fight West of WIEDERSEEBACH (R-183388) in which three PWs were captured. The speed of our withdrawal had evidently caught the enemy off guard and he was slow in coming back into the evacuated area in any strength inasmuch as night patrols made no contact. In the area patrolled by the Task Force LINDEN, the only contact made during this extremely quiet period was a 6-man enemy night patrol which withdrew toward the RHINE River when fired upon 19/.

4. The 14th Armd Division (-) remained in Corps Reserve vicinity BOUXWILLER - Troop A 94th Cav Rcn Sqdn maintained road patrols from INGWILLER toward WINGEN and REIPERTSWILLER.

5. Seven missions of 78 sorties were flown in close support of VI Corps, attacking motor transport, troop concentrations and gun positions - particularly

18/. WRJ, 4 Jan - Entries #28, 30, 52, 55, 80, 82, 99 and 101.

19/. WRJ, 4 Jan - Entries #13, 43, 45, 57, 61, 81 and 91.

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DECLASSIFIED
Authority 73517
NARA Date 4/

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in the 45th Division sector. Enemy air activity was negligible.

6. Corps artillery was concentrated in support of 45th Division operations; poor visibility failed to prevent the firing of many air and ground observed missions. Fire was placed on enemy guns, personnel and vehicles; harassing and interdictory fire was placed throughout the sector and intensified where movements were reported.

7. The 436th AAA AW Bn moved to XV Corps area, relieved from attachment to VI Corps on closing their destination. Co C (-1 Plat) 813th TD Bn was detached from the 79th Division and attached to the 45th Division at 1700A.

8. Operations Instruction No. 4, was issued at 2200A directing that: (a) the 79th Division relieve elements of the 45th Division and assume control of the 36th Engr C Regt and 1st Bn 315th Inf; initiate regrouping for employment of the division on a Southeast - Northwest axis; be prepared to counterattack and be especially careful to furnish early warning of armored threat in the zone; (b) the 45th Division continue present mission; relieve the 313th Inf Regt (-) and 1st Bn 314th Inf by 070800A; (c) the 14th Armd Division continue present mission; Corps artillery reinforce organic Division artillery and support the reliefs 20/.

9. Operations Instruction No. 52, Hq Seventh Army, 4 Jan 1945 was received confirming previous instructions halting the withdrawal at the MAGINOT Line, and directing: that VI Corps defend along the MAGINOT Line in sector and hold STRASBOURG; continue to counterattack to restore DAMBACH - BITCHE position and continue organization of secondary position 21/.

5 January

1. Hostile activity on the VI Corps front increased on 5 January as the enemy made crossings of the RHINE River on the right flank in the vicinity of GAMBSHEIM (R-1110). Meanwhile the steady pressure continued in the BITCHE salient, the main action being localized in the REIPERTSWILLER area where the enemy offered particularly stubborn resistance to the attacks by 45th Division troops trying to clear out the salient. Pressure relaxed somewhat on both the western and eastern shoulders of the salient, however, although the enemy continued his probing attempts to find a weak spot in our positions through which he could commit his armor.

2. a. While the 45th Division elements on the left flank continued to contain and reduce the BITCHE salient, the center and right of the Division sector - held by the 157th Inf and the 36th Engr C Regt remained generally quiet throughout the day. However, considerable movement of personnel and vehicles was observed behind the lines, indicating that the enemy was regrouping his forces in the DAMBACH (Q-9244) area facing the 157th Inf. and division artillery was adjusted to meet whatever threat the enemy might make in that vicinity. On the northwestern shoulder of the German salient, the 179th Inf exerted steady pressure on the enemy forces in the MEISENTHAL - SARREINSBERG area, maintaining road

20/. Annex No. 7.

21/. Annex No. 9.

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DECLASSIFIED
Authority 73517
NARA, Date 4

blocks on all highways in the sector and repulsing several small groups of enemy attempting to infiltrate. To the South, the 180th Inf resumed the attack to the North at 0800A with two battalions abreast and had reached a general line Q-763384 - Q-775382 by the end of the period, despite the stubborn resistance of small arms, mortar and machine gun fire. And to the West of the 180th zone, the 276th Inf continued its efforts to clear the town of WINGEN of the enemy forces and by the end of the period had cleared all but one small section in the eastern outskirts of the town, after overcoming stubborn resistance of heavy small arms fire.

b. The principal action around the rim of the BITCHE salient continued in the REIPERTSWILLER area where the 313th Inf (-) (with the 1st Bn, 314th Inf atchd) maintained close contact with the enemy throughout the period. Two light counterattacks during the afternoon on the left flank of this zone, at Q-768367 and Q-775375 (Southwest of WILDENGUTH), were repulsed without loss of ground, and 313th elements in the center advanced North from SAEGMUHL against heavy small arms and mortar fire from well dug-in positions to reach Q-796363. The 506 PG Bn SS was identified in this area and reported to be composed of excellent soldiers who fought until killed rather than surrender. Infiltration continued on the 313th right flank, however. A 30-man patrol cut the road between REIPERTSWILLER and ROTHBACH and at the same time a similar patrol was reported crossing the river at Q-824371. Southeast of REIPERTSWILLER, hostile forces were reported dug in near LICHTENBERG and an estimated 300 enemy were assembled in the woods to the East while other small groups armed with automatic weapons infiltrated the wooded hill further East (Q-8637).

c. To the Northeast in the PHILIPPSBOURG area, the 275th Inf (with 1st Bn 274th Inf atchd) made considerable progress on the eastern shoulder of the salient. After night patrols had found unoccupied positions capable of holding 150 men in the vicinity of Q-846384 and only small groups of enemy who withdrew on their approach, the 275th attacked West at daylight, clearing PHILIPPSBOURG quickly and pushing to positions Northwest of the town. At 1320A an enemy column of an estimated 500 men was observed moving toward PHILIPPSBOURG from the North and immediately attacked by close support planes which caused them to turn around and head back. The regimental left flank, was extended West to a general line Q-854420 - Q-854417 - Q-855395 while elements on the right pushed Northeast to reach positions at Q-900437 where contact was established with the 157th Inf holding the DAMBACH area 22/.

3. a. A considerable increase in activity occurred in the 79th Division sector - in the zone of Task Force LINDEN where a German bridgehead was established at GAMBSHEIM. Throughout the morning enemy patrols had been reported operating West of the RHINE River and a considerable build-up continued after an enemy crossing in strength between KILSTETT and DRUSENHEIM, particularly in the vicinity of GAMBSHEIM and OFFENDORF. At 1100A a 40-50 man enemy patrol was reported at R-060116 and at noon a company of Task Force LINDEN was surrounded at HERRLISHEIM and another fire fight was taking place at OFFENDORF. The main enemy effort appeared to be in the ROHRWILLER (R-125175) area where an estimated infantry company supported by two tanks approached the town at noon and forced a bridge-guarding detail to destroy the bridge and withdraw. An enemy patrol was reported as far West as WEYERSHEIM (R-0513) but it apparently pulled back as the town was found clear at 1300A.

b. To meet this threat, a two-pronged drive was immediately launched

22/. WRJ, 5 Jan - Entries #11, 70, 87, 119, 120, 127, 131 and 139.

DECLASSIFIED
Authority 73017
By NARA, Date 4

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from WEYERSHEIM and WANTZENAU (R-0707) to destroy the enemy forces before they had the chance to reinforce and consolidate their positions. Elements of the 242d Inf attacked East from WEYERSHEIM and reached the woods North of GAMBSHEIM where they were heavily engaged at the close of the period. From the South, elements of the 232d Inf pushed Northeast from WANTZENAU to clear KILSTETT (R-0909) and continue on towards GAMBSHEIM against heavy small arms fire. Meanwhile, the 314th Inf, which had assembled at SOULTZ (R-1037) at daybreak after having been relieved by the 242d Inf, was moved to BISCHWILLER late in the afternoon to secure that area Northwest of the GAMBSHEIM bridgehead. To the South, fourteen enemy had crossed the RHINE at 1310A vicinity of R-045990 and set up mortars and machine guns North of the island at STRASBOURG, but they withdrew at 1630A and there was no further activity in this sector as elements of the 3d DIA (First French Army) took over defense of the island. Throughout the rest of the Division sector, activity was negligible except for occasional patrol contact beyond the MAGINOT Line positions, though many harassing missions were fired during the night by Division and Corps artillery on main road junctions, approaches and concentration areas 23/.

4. Hostile air activity was limited to the period around 1421A when nine planes were observed over the Corps area. Three FW-190s were seen flying East of OFFWILLER (Q-8535) and two flights of two Me-109s each were observed flying Northeast near GUMBRECHTHONTEN (Q-9435). At the same time two more Me-109s were engaged by AA as they strafed the road near WOERTH but none was reported destroyed.

5. In view of the new threat in the GAMBSHEIM area, VI Corps Operation Instruction No. 5 was issued at 1900, rescinding so much of O.I. No. 4 which had extended the left boundary of the 79th Division to include that part of the 45th Division front held by the 36th Engr C Regt and 315th Inf elements, and directing the 79th Division to concentrate its efforts on the destruction of the enemy forces on the West bank of the RHINE. O.I. No. 5 also attached Troop D, 94th Cav Rcn Sqdn and Co B 47th Tk Bn to the 79th Division and directed the 45th Division to assemble one infantry regiment of Task Force HERREN for movement to the HAGUENAU area on Corps order 24/.

6. Seventh Army Operations Instruction No. 53 of this date was received - relieving VI Corps of responsibility of the STRASBOURG area at 060001A and shifting the Corps right boundary to the North to run generally along the line OLMISHEIM (Q-9611) - HOERDT (R-0311) - GAMBSHEIM (R-1110) - ACHERN (R-2403) - all of those towns going to the First French Army 25/.

6 January

1. Activity increased along the entire Corps front during 6 January as the enemy continued his pressure in the REIPERTSWILLER and GAMBSHEIM salients and showed indications of building up his forces against the 79th Division front, South of WISSEMBOURG. The 45th Division continued to encounter bitter resistance in its efforts to reduce the salient Southeast of BITCHE and Task Force LINDEN'S attacks to clean out the GAMBSHEIM - HERRLISHEIM bridgehead on the west bank of the RHINE encountered increasing resistance, indicating that the enemy had succeeded in reinforcing his troops in that sector. While there were no actual

23/. WRJ, 5 Jan - Entries #14, 17, 26, 30, 53, 55, 62, 78, 93, 108 and 141.

24/. Annex No. 7.

25/. Annex No. 9.

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DECLASSIFIED
Authority 73017
By NARA, Date 4

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major clashes on the 79th Division's MAGINOT Line positions South of WISSEMBOURG, there were indications that a major offensive might be developing there, after the 21 Panzer Rcn Bn had been identified and it appeared that the 21 Panzer Division might have been shifted from the BITCHE salient to this area. VI Corps was reinforced by the attachment of the 12th Armd Division and Combat Command "B" had commenced movement to the vicinity of HOCHFELDEN before the end of the day.

2. a. The 45th Division attacks to the North to reduce the enemy salient on the left flank met renewed stubborn resistance as the enemy resumed his aggressive tactics, after a slight let down the previous day, and launched three heavy counterattacks in the PHILIPPSBOURG area. On the left and center of the salient, a coordinated attack was launched against enemy positions by the 179th 180th and 313th Infs at 0900A. On the western shoulder, elements of the 179th and 180th had succeeded in clearing the MEISENTHAL - WILDENGUTH road as far West as the enemy road block (Q-725398) which 179th elements driving Southeast from MEISENTHAL were clearing at the close of the period. There was no change in positions in the immediate areas of MEISENTHAL and SARRIENSBERG, although the enemy remained in close contact throughout the period. Troops in the center of the 180th Inf front repulsed two hostile counterattacks of company size during the afternoon, at Q-761391 and Q-759389, and encountered particularly strong enemy pressure on the right flank in the WILDENGUTH area.

b. In the center of the salient, the 313th Inf (with 1st Bn 314th atchd) continued to make progress, moving ahead beyond REIPERTSWILLER to the high ground (Q-787384) to the Northwest against stiff resistance. Other elements, after relief by the 180th Inf in WILDENGUTH, turned Southeast to engage the enemy dug in at PICARDIE (Q-812360) and had cleared the town by sundown. To the South, the 2d Bn 276th Inf was committed to clear LICHTENBERG (Q-8135) of the hostile forces which had infiltrated the previous day, and by 2030A had freed the town and sent patrols through the heavily-wooded high ground to the East to clean out small groups of infiltrating enemy. To the Southwest the 276th Inf (-) (with the 2d Bn 274th Inf atchd) continued to engage the estimated 200-300 enemy of the 12 SS Regt who were holding out in the town. Because of the U.S. prisoners held within the town, no artillery, supported this attack, but by 1930A the town was cleared except for scattered snipers, after heavy house-to-house fighting throughout the day.

c. For the second successive day, the enemy made his principal effort in the PHILIPPSBOURG sector of the 275th Inf. During the course of the afternoon three attacks were launched against the reorganized and improved positions of the 275th Inf - each in estimated 2-3 company strength. The first which began at 1530A was broken up by an artillery concentration; the second was disorganized and repulsed by a counterattack; the third and largest which began at 1630A and involved an estimated three infantry companies resulted in fierce small arms fighting for several hours, but it had been contained by 2030A and the 275th Inf retained possession of the town and the railroad junction. The sectors of the 157th Inf and the 36th Engr C Regt on the division center and right flank were generally quiet during the day - patrols penetrating far to the front of their MAGINOT Line positions before making contact 26/.

3. a. On the left and northern front of the 79th Division sector, active patrols to the front of MAGINOT Line positions found enemy activity South of

26/. WRJ, 6 Jan - Entries #16, 29, 51, 55, 62, 74, 78, 80, 93, 106 and 115.

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DECLASSIFIED
Authority 735017
By NARA Date 4/

WISSEMBOURG considerably increased by the presence of aggressive probing patrols. At 1750A, an outpost of the 222d Inf elements in INGOLSHEIM (R-1542) was forced to withdraw to the MLR when five enemy half-tracks appeared in the town. Shortly afterwards, two prisoners from the 21 Panzer Rcn Bn were captured near this same town, and interrogation revealed that their unit had moved into SCHWEIGHOFFEN (R-1949) during the previous night and had elements operating out of RIEDSELTZ (R-1744). Although no tanks had yet been observed in the vicinity, measures were taken to meet the threat presented by the appearance of the 21 Panzer Division in this zone. CC "A" 14th Armd Division was attached to the 79th Division at 1815A and had begun movement to the SURBOURG (R-0834) area late in the period.

b. Elements of Task Force LINDEN and the 314th Inf continued to exert pressure on the hostile GAMBSHEIM bridgehead on the right of the Division sector. One company of the 232d Inf was surrounded in STATTMATTEN (R-1921) early in the day, but the 79th Cav Rcn Sqdn reinforced by a platoon of medium tanks moved North through BISCHWILLER to clear SESSENHEIM (R-1822) and STATTMATTEN to relieve the encircled group. Interrogation of the four officers and 56 enlisted men taken prisoner in this encounter revealed that they belonged to a hastily-formed battle group which had been sent across the RHINE before they had the chance to know each other. 314th Inf troops attacking East from BISCHWILLER in the early morning had captured ROHRWILLER by 1025A and had cleared DRUSENHEIM (R-1518) by mid-afternoon when they turned South towards HERRLISHEIM. Resistance stiffened at this point and forward positions had been extended only to the edge of the woods at R-148177 by the close of the period. Similar resistance stopped the columns trying to close in on GAMBSHEIM from the West and Southwest. Elements of the 222d and 242d Infs continued their attack East and reached the woods at R-105117 by 1130A but a counterattack forced them to withdraw West of the LANDGRABEN Canal (R-087120), about four kilometers East of WEYERSHEIM, where they reorganized for another attack. Elements of the 232d Inf attacking Northwest from KILSTETT reached the south edge of BETTENHOFFEN (R-1009) where they were stopped by concentrated small arms fire. At the close of the period the enemy still held HERRLISHEIM, OFFENDORF and GAMBSHEIM 27/.

4. Except for Combat Command "A" which had been attached to the 79th Division, the 14th Armd Division remained in Corps Reserve near BOUXWILLER. The 25th Tk Bn was relieved of the blocking mission in the VOSGES passes, and 94th Cav Rcn Sqdn elements maintained a screen in that zone, between WEITERSWILLER (Q-7628) and ZINSWILLER (Q-895355).

5. Corps Artillery fired a heavy program during the period, supporting the attacks in the REIPERTSWILLER and GAMBSHEIM areas. Low ceiling prevented any air OP adjustments but ground OPs were able to get many observed missions on enemy personnel, machine guns, mortars and vehicles - particularly on the three hostile counterattacks just North of PHILIPPSBOURG.

6. Seventh Army Operations Instruction No. 54 of this date was received - attaching the 12th Armored Division with all present attachments (827th TD Bn and the 522d AAA AW Bn SP) to VI Corps and authorizing the Corps Commander to move one combat command without delay. By the close of the period Combat Command "B" was enroute to assembly areas near HOCHFELDEN 28/.

7. Additional artillery support was added to VI Corps during the period

27/. WRJ, 6 Jan - Entries #26, 31, 34, 40, 57, 60, 63, 84, 85 and 86.

28/. Annex No. 9.

DECLASSIFIED
Authority 73517
NARA Date 4

when the 17th FA Group with the 975th and 977th FA Bns were detached from XV Corps and directed to move immediately to NIEDERMODERN (Q-9227), attached on arrival.

7 January

1. The focal point of enemy activity on the VI Corps front shifted to the northern flank of the 79th Division where the enemy attacked MAGINOT Line positions South of WISSEMBOURG with infantry heavily supported by armor. To the South, on the RHINE River front, the enemy attacks to enlarge his bridgehead at GAMBSHEIM also had tank support which drove back elements to DRUSENHEIM. 79th Division troops repulsed another hostile assault on ROHRWILLER, inflicting heavy personnel and materiel casualties on the enemy. In the BITCHE salient, the heaviest hostile pressure remained in the REIPERTSWILLER area after 45th Division elements had finally cleared the WINGEN and LICHTENBERG sectors of the fanatical soldiers of the 6 SS Mtn Division. In general, the enemy attitude on this left flank shifted from aggressive offense to passive, though stubborn, resistance.

2. a. The major activity on the 45th Division front took place as usual in and around the salient Southeast of BITCHE on the VI Corps left flank, where continued attacks on enemy units in the salient made very definite progress - particularly in the vicinity of WINGEN and LICHTENBERG. North of REIPERTSWILLER elements of the 313th Inf (1st Bn 314th Inf atchd) sustained the heaviest pressure from the enemy, but progress was made in the area North of the town. The isolated pocket of enemy resistance at WINGEN which was still fanatically held by SS of the 12th Mtn Regt was finally cleared by the 276th Inf (-). At the beginning of the period a large part of this enemy force in WINGEN had infiltrated from the town in groups of 20 to 40 men and some of these groups were engaged near Q-755381 as they attempted to pass through forward elements of the 179th and 180th Inf Regts and were subsequently mopped up. These SS troops were generally either killed or wounded before they were overcome - of the estimated 300-500 enemy troops originally in WINGEN only 63 prisoners were taken when the town was finally cleared about 1330A. Two officers among the 200 American PWs liberated in the town reported that the enemy received their orders to leave the town the previous night at 2400A. In the LICHTENBERG area to the East the 2d Bn 276th Inf cleared the town about 1330A and continued the attack to the high, wooded ground to the Northeast where the remnants of a battalion of the 952 GR were boxed in and eliminated, in conjunction with elements of the 313th and 274th Infs.

b. On the left flank of the Division front, elements of the 179th Inf and the 19th Armd Inf Bn attacked Southeast from SARREINSBERG and reached the vicinity of Q-743407 where the enemy remained in close contact and continued to defend the road block at Q-726397. The main attack of the 179th was delayed somewhat while units mopped up strong groups of SS Troops filtering North from WINGEN, but it got under way shortly after noon, the 1st Bn advancing to Q-750396. The left flank of the 180th Inf received a strong enemy attack which was repulsed by troops who immediately counterattacked and pushed the enemy back to a line generally along the road from Q-754387 to Q-774385. The remaining 180th Inf troops stayed in position West of WILDENGUTH and cleared up occasional enemy groups drifting North from WINGEN. The 313th Inf, with the 1st Bn 314th Inf atchd, continued to attack North from REIPERTSWILLER against strong enemy resistance from elements of the 506 Pz Bn SS intermingled with Volksgrenadiers. These assaults extended the 313th front to the high ground at Q-798386 - North of SAEGMUHL. It was apparent that the enemy troops in the area were very definitely on the defensive and that the force of their attack had spent itself.

c. Hostile activity in the BAERENTHAL - PHILIPPSBOURG - DAMBACH area was negligible throughout the period. At PHILIPPSBOURG where the enemy had

DECLASSIFIED
Authority 735017
NARA, Date 4

launched his strong drives against the 275th Inf during the previous period, only one light attack was instituted in the course of the morning and that was summarily checked. However the area was made a target for medium guns firing 15 and 17 round missions from the North just before dusk. Four tanks and one SP gun were reported firing harassing missions throughout the night, especially in the DAMBACH area. Along the right of the Division front the 157th Inf and the 36th Engr C Regt continued to improve defensive positions and maintain active patrols in an area that was generally quiet throughout the period 29/.

3. a. Along the 79th Division front extending from DRACHENBRONN (R-1043) on the North to the vicinity of GAMBSHEIM on the RHINE River, considerable enemy activity took place in two separate zones - the ASCHBACH - STUNDWILLER - BUHL area and the ROHRWILLER - HERRLISHEIM - GAMBSHEIM area. The enemy launched strong infantry attacks supported by armor during the morning in both these areas. On the extreme left divisional boundary the enemy attempted to infiltrate troops into DRACHENBRONN at the edge of the HOCHWALD forest. Further East, outposts of the 313th Inf in ASCHBACH (R-1837) were attacked at 0715A by enemy infantry, supported by 15 tanks and had knocked out or disabled five of the tanks before they were forced to withdraw to the Main Line of Resistance. At 0900A, 50 enemy dressed in white parkas took STUNDWILLER (R-1836) and continued on to occupy the town of BUHL (R-2035). However enemy efforts to breach our MLR were unsuccessful as the 313th Inf repulsed five strong enemy attacks on their positions. By mid-afternoon the enemy's aggressive program was considerably curtailed by mortar and artillery concentrations laid on these attacks. A column of infantry extending from ASCHBACH to OBERSEEBACH was observed moving South at 1525A and taken under artillery fire with good results. At 1700A, approximately 100 enemy were observed moving into INGOLSHEIM and at 2015A patrols located an estimated company of infantry dug in Southeast of CLEEBURG (R-1144). In the course of the period the 2d Bn 315th Inf reinforced by one company of medium tanks moved to KUHLENDORF (R-1335) to support the 3d Bn of the 313th Infantry.

b. In the southern sector of the 79th Division there was very little change in the overall picture although heavy contact was maintained throughout the day in the DRUSENHEIM, ROHRWILLER and GAMBSHEIM areas. Early in the period the 314th Inf launched an attack South from DRUSENHEIM but was forced back into the town by a strong enemy counterattack supported by tanks and at the close of the period the enemy held the southern part of the town while 314th Inf troops held the bridge and the northern end of the town. In the BOIS DE DRUSENHEIM area other 314th Inf elements advanced against heavy small arms and tank fire to Q-144178. The enemy was very aggressive in the vicinity of ROHRWILLER where an estimated company of enemy infantry supported by five tanks made several futile attempts to enter the town and penetrate Northeast into the wooded area but artillery broke up these attacks before contact was made and at 1500A the enemy was observed withdrawing toward HERRLISHEIM. An estimated ten tanks were used by the enemy in his operations in the vicinity of DRUSENHEIM and ROHRWILLER, of which four were knocked out near ROHRWILLER and one South of DRUSENHEIM. Ten SP guns supported enemy infantry in the GAMBSHEIM area throughout the day and considerable other tracked vehicular movement was heard in this area, indicating that a build up of armor was taking place. Dispositions of tanks and SP Guns in the bridgehead area seemed to indicate offensive intentions to the Northwest and holding actions to the Southeast.

c. To the South of GAMBSHEIM, elements of the 3d DIA attacked from

29/. WRJ, 7 Jan - Entries #35, 36, 52, 55, 58, 63, 109 and 124.

DECLASSIFIED
Authority 73517
NARA, Date 4

the vicinity of KILSTETT and succeeded in entering GAMBSHEIM but were forced to withdraw to the starting point because of heavy enemy pressure - seven tanks being lost in this operation while two enemy tanks were destroyed. The 3d DIA had assumed command of the Task Force LINDEN area at 1015A. Prisoners taken in this enemy bridgehead were primarily from Bn HOPPE of the 553 VG Division. 30/.

4. At 0930A CC "B" 12th Armd Division closed in assembly areas at HOCHFELDEN and at 1200A had been attached to the 79th Division and directed to move to the general area BISCHWILLER - GRIES - WEYERSHEIM to be prepared to meet the threat in that area. By 1600A the Division CP had opened in HOCHFELDEN, after being released to VI Corps by Seventh Army Operations Instruction No. 56 of this date. CC "A" 14th Armd Division remained attached to the 79th Division as reserve in area South of SOULTZ, while the bulk of the division remained in Corps Reserve at BOUXWILLER 31/.

5. Operations Instruction No. 7 was issued at 2200A directing in general the 12th Armd Division to be prepared to counterattack against any enemy penetrations in the 79th Division sector - from the North towards SELTZ or from the East towards BISCHWILLER 32/.

8 January

1. Enemy activity on the VI Corps front remained localized in the same three distinct areas during 8 January - the salient southeast of BITCHE, the drive of the 21 Panzer Division against 79th Division MAGINOT Line positions South of WISSEMBOURG, and the hostile GAMBSHEIM bridgehead. The 45th Division continued to make local gains on the western shoulder of the BITCHE salient but the rest of this sector was quiet although a heavy increase in vehicular and troop movements on the front facing PHILIPPSBOURG and DAMBACH suggested an enemy build-up on that eastern shoulder and there were indications that the 25 PG Division was moving in. On the northeastern sector of the Corps front, the 79th Division successfully repulsed all efforts of the 21 Panzer Division to break through their MAGINOT Line positions in the vicinity of ASCHBACH, inflicting heavy casualties to both personnel and materiel of the attacking forces. The armored attack to eliminate the enemy's GAMBSHEIM bridgehead was nullified by the many blown bridges which halted progress of the tanks, and by the close of the day there had been no more than minor changes in front line dispositions. Enemy air activity was negligible but there was a decided increase in hostile artillery fire across the entire front.

2. a. The principal contact activity along the 45th Division front continued to take place in the salient Southeast of BITCHE. Within the salient proper, extending from the shoulders between SARREINSBERG on the West and PHILIPPSBOURG on the East, down to the high ground just North of REIPERTSWILLER, the main enemy resistance continued in front of the 179th Inf, 180th Inf and 313th Inf dispositions tied in on a line extending between Q-758384 and Q-835374. These regiments launched a coordinated attack North of this line at 0800A. The 179th Inf got off as planned but made little progress against stubborn enemy resistance. However, elements driving Northwest cleared up the road block at Q-725397 which had been held by the enemy since the beginning of their initial advance. Other units of the 179th Inf plus the 19th Armd Inf Bn

30/. WRJ, 7 Jan - Entries #28, 33, 48, 56, 58, 62, 85, 93, 99 and 103.

31/. Annex No. 9.

32/. Annex No. 7.

DECLASSIFIED
Authority 73517
By NARA Date 4

(-) held the towns of SARREINSBERG and GOETZENBRUCK (Q-7442), on the Corps left flank. In the WILDENGUTH area Northwest of REIPERTSWILLER, elements of the 180th Inf received a strong enemy attack at 0800A, anticipating their own attack by a quarter hour - and were forced to withdraw to a line Q-788384 - Q-791387 along the MEISENTHAL - REIPERTSWILLER Road. However the regimental reserve counterattacked against heavy enemy resistance, restored the orginal positions and advanced the line to Q-786389. Tied in on the right of the 180th Inf, the 313th Inf (with 1st Bn 314th Inf atchd), continued to attack to the North, above REIPERTSWILLER but encountered stiff enemy small arms resistance and made little or no advance. The enemy launched three light, but persistent counterattacks supported by artillery fire Northwest of REIPERTSWILLER in the course of the morning - all of which were repulsed. Elements of the 313th Inf worked around to the rear of Hill 336 (Q-809379) in an attempt to dislodge enemy forces from well organized positions where they were impeding the forward progress of the regiment but this maneuver failed and toward the close of the period they withdrew.

b. In the PHILIPPSBOURG - DAMBACH area the 275th Inf maintained and improved defensive positions. There was little evidence of a change in the enemy's dispositions or attitude here but considerable activity was observed in the area indicating a build up in this sector. An enemy column estimated at 200 men was seen marching Southeast from NEUNHOFFEN toward PHILIPPSBOURG, while personnel and horse-drawn vehicles were observed North of the town. Northwest of the town at Q-854446 the enemy appeared to be assembling other additional troops and vehicles. Although no definite information or identification of the 25th PG Division was made, it was feared that this mobile unit might be assembling in the rear areas of the PHILIPPSBOURG zone, and the 275th Inf was warned to be especially watchful. At 1020A, three tanks were seen Southwest of NEUNHOFFEN and at 1045A, three more tanks were observed moving West in the vicinity of Q-890475. On the 157th Inf and 36th Engr C Regt sectors there was very little activity but contact was maintained with the enemy by active patrols as far North as LEMBACH and WINGEN (R-0648) 33/.

3. a. Along the 79th Division front considerable fighting took place in the northern sector around the town of ASCHBACH (R-1837) where repeated attempts by the enemy to break through positions of the 313th Inf were repulsed with heavy losses in personnel and tanks. On the RHINE River front in the bridgehead sector to the South, fighting continued near ROHRWILLER and DRUSENHEIM - neither side making any appreciable gains during the period. In the area South of the WISSEMBOURG Gap, the 21 Panzer Division renewed its attacks against 313th Inf positions in the ASCHBACH area at 0700A, employing at least two Bns (II Bn 192 PG and II Bn 125 PG) supported by an estimated ten tanks. These unsuccessful attacks continued throughout the morning and according to PW's the enemy suffered heavy casualties to personnel from small arms and mortar fire and an estimated 2 - 4 tanks were knocked out by our artillery fire. At 1100A, thirty enemy had surrendered to the 313th Inf and at 1130A, the enemy withdrew to the vicinity of OBERSEEBACH (R-1841) where he was reported assembling tanks and personnel but at 1225A, twelve P-47's bombed an assembly area in the town with excellent results - a PW reporting about 100 wounded Germans around the ASCHBACH - STUNDWILLER (R-1836) area after this air attack. Except for heavy small arms fire on a patrol to CLEEBOURG (R-1144) and some mortar fire on forward elements during the early afternoon, hostile activity on this front quieted down as the enemy apparently began reorganizing and re-

33/. WRJ, 8 Jan 45 - Entries #13, 31, 30, 33, 39, 47, 50, 54, 68, 71 and 83.

DECLASSIFIED
Authority 735017
NARA Date 4

grouping his forces. A total of 57 prisoners were taken during the day - from the 125 PGR, the 192 PGR, and the 220 Engr Bn. The 222d and 242d Inf Regts continued to maintain their positions to the West and East of the 313th Inf, along the MAGINOT Line with only light contact during the period.

b. In the RHINE River area infantry and armored elements made continued attempts to narrow the hostile bridgehead but were unsuccessful - the enemy apparently concentrating his attention at retaining what he already held. While the 232d Inf continued to improve positions across the WEYERSHEIM - GAMBSHEIM road on a line (R-083117) - (R-090126), and blocked to the East, the 314th Inf attacked South from DRUSENHEIM and ROHRWILLER but made little progress against stiff enemy resistance of small arms, mortar and heavy artillery. The enemy's successful repulsing of this attack made it impossible for engineer elements to construct bridges over the MODER River which seriously curtailed the tactical movement of armor against enemy positions Southeast of the River. The enemy assumed the aggressive momentarily and launched two small but unsuccessful counterattacks against infantry along the River East of ROHRWILLER. Although the 314th Inf was unable to establish a bridgehead over the canal South of DRUSENHEIM, elements reached the edge of the woods vicinity of R-147175 one mile Southwest of the town, where a local enemy counterattack was repulsed late in the period. After the right flank of the 314th advanced East from ROHRWILLER at 1000A to reach a line R-131163 - R-135166, CC "B" of the 12th Armd Division attacked to the East from ROHRWILLER at 1045A. Held up by blown bridges, they turned South toward HERRLISHEIM where their patrols penetrated to within 1½ kilometers of the town without contacting the enemy. The 714th Tk Bn attacked South on the West side of the canal to reach a line (R-115150) - (R-120163), while the 56th Armd Inf Bn attacked South on the East side of the canal and reached positions on line (R-126161) - (R-130163). In the southern part of the bridgehead, at GAMBSHEIM, no activity was reported 34/.

9 January

1. The northeastern flank of the 79th Division sector saw the major activity during 9 January, as the enemy continued his heavy pressure in that area and unleashed a strong offensive, spear-headed by 25-30 tanks. PW identifications indicated that the 25 PG Division, which was thought to be in rear areas of the BITCHE salient only the day before, had joined the 21 Panzer Division in this attack against the MAGINOT Line positions South of WISSEMBOURG. One of these hostile attacks during the day penetrated the MLR and virtually surrounded the town of HATTEN (R-1833) but the 79th positions were being restored by the end of the period. In the two other critical areas - the BITCHE salient and the GAMBSHEIM bridgehead - stubborn enemy resistance continued, denying all attempts to eliminate them.

2. a. On the Corps left flank, 45th Division troops trying to eliminate the BITCHE salient met increasingly stubborn resistance from the 6 SS Mtn and the 361 VG Divisions and made only minor progress. On the northwestern shoulder the 179th Inf (with the 19th Armd Inf Bn (-) atchd) continued to mop up scattered groups of enemy in the SARREINSBERG area and cleared the vital SARREINSBERG - WINGEN road before resuming the attack Southeast. Progress was halted at the road junction (Q-758408) where 179th elements met heavy automatic

34/. WRJ, 8 Jan - Entries #20, 40, 41, 63, 65, 72 and 85.

DECLASSIFIED
Authority 735017
By NARA, Date 4

weapons fire and were forced to take defensive positions at q-755408, overlooking the road junction. To their right, the 180th Inf made only minor progress in its attack to the North against the 6 SS Rcn Bn and the 506 PG SS Bn and were forced to repulse a strong counterattack against their positions along the line q-765336 - q-785336, Northwest of [illegible]. To the Northeast of [illegible], the 313th Inf made small gains to seize the hill at q-810381 and another hill at q-820381 where they took 46 prisoners, but the stubborn resistance by elements of the 952 and 953 Regts of the 361 VG Division prevented any substantial progress.

b. On the northeastern shoulder of the salient, the 276th Inf made considerable progress on its left flank, advancing to the town of [illegible] (q-9439) against comparatively light small arms opposition, clearing the town, and taking seventeen prisoners by 2130A. No advances were made by the rest of the 275th and 274th Inf elements lying in in the PHILIPPSBOURG areas, and there were indications that elements of the German 36 Inf Division had taken up positions in the vicinity of [illegible] (q-872432) to counter any future thrust. Only minor contact was made on the long fronts of the 157th Inf and the 36th Engr C Regt, extending from DAMBACH to [illegible], during the day. However, a considerable increase in hostile activity behind the lines in the [illegible] area seemed to substantiate reports that the 245 Division was moving up into the lines. After dark, patrols of the 157th Inf encountered an undetermined number of enemy in the DAMBACH area 35/.

3. a. The enemy resumed his offensive against the northeastern front of the 79th Division early in the period with attacks in the [illegible] (n-1636) and [illegible] (n-1633) areas, and continued to offer stubborn resistance to all efforts to eliminate his [illegible] bridgehead on the South, along the west banks of the [illegible]. Just before daylight the 313th Inf had stopped an early probing attack short of the [illegible] in the [illegible] area, but at the same time the stronger enemy attack - an estimated two infantry battalions supported by seven tanks - was making progress at [illegible]. This assault forced the 242d Inf to withdraw temporarily from their positions, but by 0940A the line had been restored and the attack dispersed except for a few snipers left in the town. Identification of prisoners from the 35 and 119 PGRs indicated that the 25 PG Division had joined the 21 Panzer Division in this sector.

b. The enemy resumed his offensive against the 242d Inf positions at 1300A with 25-30 tanks spearheading an undetermined number of infantry, and by 1350A [illegible] was surrounded on three sides and tanks had by-passed the town and pushed on to points just South of [illegible] (n-1633). A heavy concentration of artillery and tank destroyer fire broke the momentum of the attack and a counterattack by the 242d Inf at 1500A forced the enemy armor to withdraw to the East after an estimated 13-15 tanks had been knocked out. By 2145A, all but the eastern end of [illegible] had been cleared, and elements of the 242d Inf were fighting in that section to clean out the remaining small hostile groups and restore their [illegible], East of the town. When the enemy was observed withdrawing, the reinforced battalion of the 313th Inf, which had been held in reserve as a counterattack force, was not committed and took up positions in [illegible].

c. On the right flank of the 79th Division front, CC "B" 12th Armd Division met continued stubborn resistance in their efforts to reduce the

35/. MtJ, 9 Jan - Entries #29, 34, 45, 50, 63, 67, 68, 73 and 85.

DECLASSIFIED
Authority 73517
NARA, Date 4

GAMBSHEIM bridgehead. The principal activity took place North of HEMMLISHEIM where an hostile attack by infantry supported by SP guns forced elements of the 314th Inf and the 56th Armd Inf Bn to withdraw across the river at R-130168 by 0915A. Later as tanks of the 714th Tank Bn moved into position and sprayed the area with machine gun and SP weapons fire, the infantry elements moved back across the river and reached R-133166. Attacking South against small arms opposition, the 56th AIB reached the edge of HEMMLISHEIM by 1130A and had occupied two-thirds of the town by 1430A, capturing approximately 100 prisoners in the operation. On the northern front of this bridgehead the right flank of the 314th Inf repulsed a small enemy infantry attack designed to take the bridge at R-132164 while elements in the North of DAUSENHEIM were subjected to heavy artillery fire. Except for these activities and the hostile artillery interdictions of bridging operations in NORTHEIM and DAUSENHEIM, the remainder of the bridgehead was relatively quiet, although increased enemy movement to the North, hinted the enemy intended an attack southward to join forces with his GAMBSHEIM bridgehead 36/.

10 January

1. Compared with the previous few days, the VI Corps front was quiet on 10 January. The enemy still clung tenaciously to his salient Southeast of BITCHE and his bridgehead in the HATTENHEIM - GAMBSHEIM area, but throughout the Corps area his attitude had changed to one of passive resistance in lieu of the aggressiveness he had shown in previous days. In the HATTEN area he seemed to be bidding for time to reorganize and recuperate the 21 Panzer and the 25 PG Divisions for another strong attack on 79th Division elements in that sector. During the day minor gains were made by the 45th Division on the western shoulder of the BITCHE salient and some progress was made by 79th Division elements attacking HATTENHEIM - but only after bitter house-to-house fighting in both those areas on the extreme flanks of the Corps.

2. a. In the 45th Division sector the main activity occurred on the western shoulder of the enemy salient, between SARRALBE and ROHRBACH, and East along the high ground North of MITTELBRONN. During the morning the 179th Inf, on the left flank, had secured the trail junction at Q-750393 and was clearing the ridge (Q-745403) South of SARRALBERG of scattered groups of enemy. Attacking ROHRBACH from the North and West, other 179th Inf troops advanced through heavy mortar and artillery fire to the outskirts and were heavily engaged in the town by the close of the period after repulsing one small hostile counterattack about 2200A. The right flank of this regimental attack reached the line Q-744395 - Q-752396, moving forward only slowly against an enemy defending stubbornly with small arms fire from well dug-in positions.

b. To the East in the valley North of MITTELBRONN, the 180th Inf attack to the North had made only negligible progress after a day of heavy small arms fighting - PW identifications indicating the 11 SS Regt of the 6 SS Mtn Division had moved into this area to reinforce the enemy defenses. However, the 180th Inf continued to send strong combat patrols to the North to find a suitable attack route. To the right, the 313th Inf made better progress in its attacks to the North and northeast of WEIPERTSWILLER. The left column pushed North of SARRALBE to the high ground at Q-795382 while the right flank had

36/. MHJ, 9 Jan - Entries #24, 31, 46, 49, 61, 66 and 70.

DECLASSIFIED
Authority 73017
By NARA Date 4

[redacted]

advanced rapidly to the high ground to the Northeast at [illegible]-818339 before being stopped by determined resistance from enemy infantry employing automatic weapons fire from well dug-in positions.

c. On the eastern shoulder of the salient, the 276th Inf attacked Northeast with three battalions abreast to clean out the heavily-wooded ridges Northeast of MECHERNICH and made rapid progress until increased opposition was encountered along the line [illegible]-832375 - [illegible]-837389 - [illegible]-842388. The rest of Task Force HELLER - the 274th and 275th Infs - continued to improve defensive positions in the KALL TAL - PHILIPPSHEIM area, their aggressive patrols finding little indication of strong enemy activity in that sector. To the East, the long fronts of the 157th Inf and the 36th Engr C Regt remained quiet, activity limited to normal patrolling 37/.

3. a. Along the 79th Division front combat activity remained localized - in the vicinity of HATTEN on the North and HEINLERMEN in the bridgehead area to the South. At 1030A the enemy had launched a small counterattack of infantry and tanks to bolster his troops still in the town of HATTEN and this reinforced group offered stubborn resistance throughout the day, to all attempts by the 242d Inf to restore its positions along the MAGINOT Line. During the afternoon the reserve battalion of the 315th Inf was finally committed to support the 242d Inf, and by the end of the period these troops had reached the eastern end of the town which they were clearing against heavy small arms opposition. Prisoners taken in HATTEN were restricted to elements of the 25 Pz Gren Bn and Kettle Group Loewen, indicating that the major units of the 25 PG Division which had launched the heavy attacks in this area the previous day had been withdrawn for recuperation and reorganization.

b. On the [illegible] River front to the South continued efforts were made to reduce the enemy bridgehead in the [illegible] - [illegible] area. After repulsing an enemy attack in the [illegible] area in the early morning hours, the 314th Inf made negligible progress in its advance to the South against heavy small arms and self-propelled gun fire. In the town of [illegible], the 56th AIB was also heavily engaged throughout the period by enemy small arms fire supported by five tanks, and was almost surrounded before two companies of the 714th Tk Bn were sent in as reinforcements to restore the situation. By the end of the period, two thirds of the town had been cleared, but the enemy continued to resist with sporadic street fighting in the southern section of the town. It was apparent that the enemy had considerably reinforced his troops in this bridgehead when elements of the 1119, 1120 and 1121 Regts of the 553 VG Division were identified during the day 38/.

4. The 12th Armd Division, less elements of CC "B" who were operating on the GAMBSHEIM bridgehead with the 79th Division, remained in Corps reserve in the HOCHSELDEN area, as the 92d Cav Rcn Sqdn screened the Corps right flank. Combat Command "A" of the 14th Armd Division remained attached to the 79th Division, in reserve South of SOLLTZ, and elements of the 94th Cav Rcn Sqdn screened the [illegible] road while the remainder of the division remained in Corps reserve near BOUXWILLER.

5. There were no close support missions by XIX TAC during the period, but enemy air activity was heavy. Twenty-six hostile planes, including ten jet-pro-

37/. MRJ, 10 Jan - Entries #16, 37, 45, 55, 63, 64 and 82.

38/. MRJ, 10 Jan - Entries #8, 15, 23, 26, 51 and 64.

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DECLASSIFIED
Authority 735017
By IM NARA Date 4

pelled Me-262s, appeared over the Corps area on bombing and strafing missions, particularly in the SOULTZ area, where one Me-109 was shot down. Corps artillery was heavy during the night, laying down heavy harassing fires in the area West of SELTZ where the 25 PG Division was believed to be regrouping. TOTs were fired during the day on assembly points, enemy occupied towns and crossing sites in the GAMBSHEIM area.

6. At 0001A the boundary between VI Corps and XV Corps on the left had been swung South on the VOLKSBERG (Q-6838) hinge and now ran Southwest to Northeast generally between MEISENTHAL and the lake at Q-8545 - in accordance with Seventh Army Directive X-155 dated 8 January 1945 39/.

11 January

1. Two heavy enemy attacks hit VI Corps positions during 11 January, as heavy fighting continued in the BITCHE salient and in the HATTEN - RITTERSHOFFEN area. While the 45th Division made some local gains on the western shoulder of the hostile salient southeast of BITCHE, a renewed offensive by the 6 SS Mtn Division deepened the salient, North of REIPERTSWILLER, and night counterattacks had only partially restored positions in that area. The heaviest fighting of the day took place in HATTEN and RITTERSHOFFEN where the German 25 PG Division continued its heavy attacks to break through the 79th Division MLR positions along the MAGINOT Line, and had occupied the greater part of both towns by the end of the period after repulsing a counterattack by CC "A" 14th Armd Division. The GAMBSHEIM bridgehead area was comparatively quiet as CC "B" 12th Armd Division withdrew to defensive positions Southeast of BISCHWILLER.

2. a. Activity on the 45th Division front remained localized in the zone of the BITCHE salient. While some local gains were made on the western shoulder by the 179th Inf, the salient was deepened by a strong attack of the 6 SS Mtn Division against positions of the 180th Inf in the WILDENGUTH - SAEGMUHL area. During the morning, elements of the 179th Inf attacked ALTHORN and by mid-afternoon had cleared the town, after mopping up scattered small arms resistance, and occupied the high ground to the South. But down in the center of the salient, both the 180th Inf and the 313th Inf were forced to make withdrawals from their line on the high ground North of REIPERTSWILLER by the concerted attack of the 6 SS Mtn Division which had been reinforced by the arrival of the 11 SS Mtn Regt. The enemy attack of an estimated four battalions was launched at 0730 and forced withdrawals to a defensive line Q-770387 - Q-792377, just North of the WILDENGUTH - SAEGMUHL road. These positions were firmly held until late afternoon when a resumption of the hostile attack forced slight withdrawals until it was stopped along the 38 Northing. After moving from its positions on the Division right flank to assembly areas in REIPERTSWILLER, the 2d Bn 157th Inf attacked North at 2130A to restore these lost positions, but forward elements were halted at Q-795381 by heavy small arms and automatic weapons fire.

b. On the right of the salient, the 276th Inf made only minor progress against small arms resistance in its attack to the Northeast over the heavily-wooded ridges East of REIPERTSWILLER, and had not come up abreast of the 313th Inf positions by nightfall. But after regrouping shortly before the end of the period, elements were moving ahead into more favorable positions for a continuation of the attack to the Northwest the next morning. The sectors of the rest

39/. Annex No. 10.

DECLASSIFIED
Authority 73817
By IM NARA Date 4

of Task Force HERREN - from PHILIPPSBOURG to DAMBACH - and the 157th Inf and 36th Engr C Regt - from DAMBACH to CLIMBACH - remained generally quiet throughout the period, although strong patrols remained active and maintained contact generally along the 46 Northing 40/.

3. a. Continued heavy contact was maintained in the HATTEN area throughout the day as the enemy renewed his attacks on that northeastern flank of the 79th Division front. Elements of the 315th Inf in the RITTERSHOFFEN - HATTEN area were subjected to sporadic enemy artillery fire during the night and considerable vehicular traffic was heard moving South from INGOLSHEIM (R-1542) towards HATTEN before daylight, indicating another attack by elements of the 25 PG Division was imminent. Half an hour after an enemy artillery barrage had been concentrated in the western half of HATTEN - held by 2d Bn 315th Inf - a column of enemy infantry and tanks was seen moving towards the town at 0730A. By 0810A these troops had infiltrated through the heavy mist and snow, which restricted visibility to 150 yards, to the northern end of RITTERSHOFFEN. As the enemy continued to build up his forces by infiltration in that town, intense close-in fighting was going on in HATTEN where the reinforced hostile infantry were being supported by 15 tanks before noon. The fifty-percent increase in enemy artillery fire on both those towns indicated that the artillery of the 25th PG Division was moving into the area. While the 3d Bn 315th Inf managed to restrict the attacking force to the north end of RITTERSHOFFEN after a day of heavy fighting, the additional infantry and armored elements of the 25 PG Division, driving on HATTEN from the North and South, had succeeded in cutting off the 2d Bn in the southwest corner of the town.

b. To meet this threat, CC "A" 14th Armd Division jumped off at 1615A from a line R-144342 - R-141357, East of KUHLENDORF (R-1335), in an attempt to clear RITTERSHOFFEN and continue on to HATTEN but was stopped by heavy small arms, automatic weapons, artillery and tank fire about 400 yards West of the former town. During the evening, plans were made to employ the rest of the 14th Armd Division, which had moved up behind the threatened sector, in a counterattack the next morning to clear RITTERSHOFFEN and HATTEN, collect the remaining 315th Inf troops in both towns, restore the original MAGINOT Line positions and meet the threat of the hostile build-up of armor in BUHL (R-198353) to the Northeast.

c. Other MAGINOT Line positions along the 79th Division front - held by the 222d Inf to the Northwest of HATTEN and by the 242d and 232d Infs to the South of that critical area - remained quiet, with activity limited to patrolling. In the GAMBSHEIM bridgehead area, there was considerable regrouping. The 314th Inf maintained its line on the northern shoulder - R-132164 - R-146175 - R-160180, Southwest of DRUSENHEIM, but CC "B", 12th Armd Division withdrew from HERRLISHEIM at 0215A to reorganize after its heavy battles of the previous day. The 714th Tk Bn assembled at BISCHWILLER while the 56th Armd Inf Bn established a defensive line to the Southeast of the town, running generally R-096154 - R-120170. On the south flank, elements of the 232d Inf held their defensive positions on the bridge at R-087120, midway between WEYERSHEIM and GAMBSHEIM. Corps artillery fired a TOT on an enemy assembly point, enemy-occupied towns and river crossing sites in the bridgehead area, while hostile artillery was limited to sporadic concentrations on positions of the 314th Inf South of DRUSENHEIM 41/.

40/. WRJ, 11 Jan - Entries #18, 27, 38, 50, 56, 76, 84, 97 and 101.

41/. WRJ, 11 Jan - Entries #10, 24, 26, 32, 33, 37, 45, 49, 56, 60, 61, 67, 74, 77, 84, 96, 99 and 107.

DECLASSIFIED
Authority 73017
By NARA, Date 4

4. At 0800A, Operations Instruction No. 8 was issued to outline the plan of relief of 45th Division elements by the 36th Division of XV Corps to complete adjustment of the VI Corps left boundary in the BITCHE salient area 42/.

5. At 1730A, Operations Instruction No. 9 was issued directing: (a) the 14th Armd Division (-) to move without delay to the vicinity of WOERTH (R-0037), prepared to counterattack against enemy penetrations - South from LEMBACH (R-0445) or West from HATTEN (R-1733); (b) the 540th Engr C Regt to organize and occupy a defensive line WINGEN - WIMMENAU; and (c) confirming the relief of the 19th Armd Inf Bn and Cos A, 25th and 47th Tk Bns from attachment to the 45th Division and their reversion to control of the 14th Armd Division 43/.

6. At 2100A, Operations Instruction No. 10 was issued, directing in general: (a) the 14th Armd Division to pass through 79th Division positions and attack to capture the line STUNDWILLER - BUHL - FORET DE HATTEN (R-2034); and (b) the 79th Division to follow up the armored attack and reoccupy restored MAGINOT Line positions 44/.

12 January

1. Heavy fighting continued throughout 12 January in the two critical areas on the VI Corps front - the BITCHE salient which the enemy had driven into the left flank of the 45th Division sector, and the RITTERSHOFFEN - HATTEN area where the enemy had broken through MAGINOT Line positions of the 79th Division. After the enemy had shifted to defensive measures, the 45th Division made minor advances on both shoulders of the BITCHE salient and regained the high ground North of WILDENGUTH which had been lost the previous day to the 6 SS Mtn Division. The 14th Armd Division attack to restore the 79th Division MLR in the HATTEN area met only partial success after a day of heavy fighting. CC "A" succeeded in clearing all but one corner of RITTERSHOFFEN to relieve the battalion of the 315th Inf which had been cut off in the town, but the attack of CC "B" developed heavy fighting 300 yards West of HATTEN and the infantry elements were still surrounded in the town at the end of the period.

2. a. Considerable local gains to restore previous positions in the rim of the BITCHE salient were made by left flank elements of the 45th Division as the enemy attitude changed from aggressive attack to stubborn defense. On the western shoulder, the 179th Inf jumped off from the ALTHORN area with three battalions abreast at 0730A against moderate resistance which was generally limited to small arms and machine gun fire. Elements in the center struck two enemy rifle companies well dug in on the ridge at Q-758389 and were halted there late in the morning until a platoon of tanks had come up to dislodge the hostile forces. Despite increased resistance of heavy mortar and artillery fire during the afternoon, the advance continued to a general line Q-752411 - Q-768387. On the nose of the salient, the 180th Inf attacked at 1430A to reoccupy the positions lost the previous day and had advanced to the high ground at Q-780389 by the close of the day, despite the intense enemy mortar and artillery fire. To their right, the 2d Bn 157th Inf, which had been moved into the area to provide a counter-attacking force to restore positions North of REIPERTSWILLER,

42/. Annex No. 7.

43/. Annex No. 7.

44/. Annex No. 7.

DECLASSIFIED
Authority 73517
By NARA Date

pushed North over the heavily-wooded ridges to gain a line Q-792383 - Q-799385 despite stubborn small arms opposition from elements of the 6 SS Mtn Division. To the East of REIPERTSWILLER, the 313th Inf consolidated its positions and mopped up the area, a strong combat patrol capturing seventeen enemy who had been defending a road block near the bridge at Q-824371.

b. On the eastern shoulder of the salient, the 276th Inf stopped a company-sized enemy attack in the morning, and then continued its advance against scattered small arms fire to establish a new line running generally Q-827383 - Q-832390. To the Northeast, elements of the 275th Inf encountered heavy small arms fire Northwest of OBERMUHLTHAL but made local gains to establish a line Q-833397 - Q-834404 while the main body of Task Force HERREN held the quiet front: OBERMUHLTHAL - PHILIPPSBOURG - DAMBACH. The rest of the long Division front held by the 157th Inf (-) and the 36th Engr C Regt, from DAMBACH to CLIMBACH, was quiet, activity being limited to aggressive patrolling to maintain contact 45/.

3. a. Once again the heaviest fighting on the Corps front was centered in the RITTERSHOFFEN - HATTEN area where fierce battles went on throughout the day, as the 14th Armd Division attacked East in an effort to relieve the encircled battalions of the 315th Inf in the two towns. CC "A" jumped off at 0900 and made rapid progress against slight initial resistance to reach the northern end of the town within an hour. Hostile opposition remained light throughout the morning except for strongpoints in the southeastern corner of the town - near the church and the cemetery. By noon, infantry had cleaned out all resistance near the church but the position in the cemetery had been strongly reinforced by seven tanks and artillery fire, and intense house-to-house fighting continued through the end of the period in that southeastern corner of RITTERSHOFFEN where the enemy employed small arms, mortar, tank, SP gun and heavy artillery fire to halt the advance of CC "A".

b. The attempt of CC "B" to relieve the encircled 2d Bn 315th Inf made very little progress. The attack which jumped off at 1115A was halted 500 yards West of the town when armored infantry was pinned down by heavy machine gun and small arms fire, and two supporting tanks were knocked out by 88mm fire. By 1620A, this infantry column had pushed ahead to within 300 yards of HATTEN, but then was forced to withdraw after suffering heavy casualties from the intense hostile artillery fire. Enemy tanks which had taken up positions on the western fringe of the town, between the encircled elements of the 315th Inf and the line of attack, prevented the heavy employment of the CC "B" armor. By the close of the period, the 2d Bn 315th Inf was still holding its positions in the southwestern corner of the town, although its strength had been considerably depleted by heavy casualties incurred after a day of heavy contact 46/.

4. There were no changes in the other MAGINOT Line positions of the 79th Division front, to the Northwest and Southeast of the critical HATTEN area, and the line remained quiet except in the HOFFEN area where the 3d Bn 313th Inf was subjected to heavy caliber artillery fire throughout the period. In the GAMBSHEIM bridgehead, 315th Inf elements holding the northern shoulder at DRUSENHEIM were subjected to harassing artillery fire and direct small arms fire during the afternoon and 56th Armd Infantry positions East of ROHRWILLER received a heavy mortar concentration about 1500A, but generally the area was quiet. Patrols of the 315th, probing to the North, reported enemy road blocks

45/. WRJ, 12 Jan - Entries #8, 15, 24, 31, 35, 60, 72 and 91.

46/. WRJ, 12 Jan - Entries #11, 14, 17, 19, 22, 26, 43, 51, 56, 58, 71, 76 and 85.

DECLASSIFIED
Authority 73517
By NARA Date 4

between the HAGUENAU Forest and the RHINE. Patrols of the 56th AIB found the enemy dug in on the banks of the ZORN Canal as far West as R-104135 and noted increased activity in the vicinity of HERRLISHEIM where the enemy seemed to be improving his defenses 47/.

5. Bad weather prevented any close air support during the day, and there were no hostile planes reported over the area. Air OPs were grounded, but Corps artillery continued concentrations on the two threatened zones with ground observation. TOTs were fired on enemy assembly points at CAMP DE BITCHE (Q-8150), EQUELSHARDT (Q-8246) and MOUTERHOUSE (Q-7942); 240mm fire was directed against the communications center of WISSEMBOURG and on enemy assembly points in STUNDWILLER (R-1836) and ASCHBACH (R-1837); a heavy counterbattery program was fired against the guns supporting the enemy actions in the HATTEN area.

6. The 62d AA Gun Bn was relieved of attachment to VI Corps and commenced movement to the XXI Corps zone, while the 256th Engr C Bn closed in assembly areas at STEINBOURG (Q-7618), attached to VI Corps.

7. At 1100A Operations Instruction No. 11 was issued FOR PLANNING PURPOSES ONLY, outlining a withdrawal to a new MLR along the line VOLKSBERG (Q-6838) - WIMMENAU (Q-7635) - HAGUENAU (R-0424) - BISCHWILLER (R-0918) - if the increasing enemy pressure should necessitate such a withdrawal to those more favorable defensive positions 48/.

13 January

1. The RITTERSHOFFEN - HATTEN area continued to be the center of activity on the Corps front throughout 13 January, as continued assaults by the 14th Armd Division to restore MLR positions of the 79th Division made considerable progress. After a day of heavy fighting, in which the 25 PG Division had counter-attacked three times, elements of the 14th Armored Division had cleared all but one corner of RITTERSHOFFEN and had simultaneously driven the enemy from most of HATTEN and re-established contact with the isolated battalion of the 315th Inf. After forces of the German 6 SS Mtn Division reverted to the defensive, the 45th Division made some gains on the western shoulder of the BITCHE salient, but was limited to minor advances around the rest of the salient's rim. Action in the area of the enemy's GAMBSHEIM bridgehead was limited to patrol clashes.

2. a. On the Corps left flank, continued aggressive thrusts by the 45th Division troops kept the enemy on the defensive in his salient Southeast of BITCHE, and some minor gains were made in the course of the period. Contact over the rest of the Division front remained light, as an intense regrouping program began to set the stage for the relief of Task Force HERREN which was to be replaced by the 103d Division. On the western shoulder of the enemy salient, the 179th Inf attacked East from the vicinity of ALTHORN at 0900A and made minor gains against stubborn small arms fire, meeting particularly bitter fighting in the vicinity of LE FORLENKOPF (Q-780388) before forcing the enemy to withdraw. The moderate mortar and light artillery fire was a considerable decrease over that of the previous day. By the end of the period a general line Q-760402 - Q-764386 had been established across the ridges Northwest of WILDENGUTH. North of WILDENGUTH, the left flank of the 180th Inf attack made no

47/. WRJ, 12 Jan - Entries #14, 19, 43 and 71.

48/. Annex No. 7.

DECLASSIFIED
Authority 73517
NARA Date 4

progress against intense small arms fire from well dug-in positions, but the center of the regimental front was pushed ahead to Q-786385 where progress was halted by heavy small arms and automatic weapons fire. The 1st Bn 314th Inf, which had been attached to the 180th, remained in close contact on the regimental right flank, encountering moderate small arms and machine gun fire throughout the day.

b. The rest of the long Division front remained quiet, except for patrol activity, as regrouping of battalions began - preparatory to the relief of Task Force HERREN by the 103d Division in accordance with Seventh Army Operations Instruction No. 59 of this date. The 157th Inf and the 36th Engr C Regt began battalion movements to take over the eastern shoulder of the BITCHE salient from the 276th and 275th Infs of Task Force HERREN which simultaneously began battalion shifts to take over the division right flank running generally between DAMBACH and CLIMBACH, in addition to the line OBERMUHLTHAL - DAMBACH already held by the 274th Inf. Except for these movements, activity along this part of the division front was limited to vigorous patrolling 49/.

3. a. The HATTEN - RITTERSHOFFEN area remained the hotspot of the northeastern Corps flank in the center of the 79th Division zone during the day. As the 14th Armd Division continued its counterattack to restore the MLR along the MAGINOT Line, considerable progress was made towards clearing the two critical towns and contact was re-established with the battalion which had been cut off in HATTEN, but the enemy still retained small footholds in both towns at the end of the period. CC "A", with the 3d Bn 315th Inf attached, continued its assault on RITTERSHOFFEN and elements of the 48th Tk Bn had cut the road running East to HATTEN early in the morning. Within the town, the 68th AIB and the 315th Inf elements pushed ahead against intense opposition from enemy infantry supported by flak wagons, flame throwers and tanks and cleared the town by late afternoon except for the strongpoints in the church and cemetery area. Two small hostile attacks about dusk were quickly repulsed, but CC "A" was heavily engaged towards the close of the period, when a strong enemy attack of infantry, supported by flame-throwing tanks, developed from the Northeast. The 68th AIB and elements of the 315th Inf were driven from their positions by the initial impact of this assault, but quickly reorganized behind positions of the 48th Tk Bn which had contained the counterattack 100 yards West of the church after inflicting heavy personnel casualties and knocking out eight tanks.

b. To the East, CC "B" attempted to outflank HATTEN to the Northeast, but was forced to withdraw after three attempts because of the intense artillery and anti-tank fire from BUHL, to the Northeast. Meanwhile, CC "R" attacked East from NIEDERBETSCHDORF (R-1333) at 0800A to make a frontal assault on HATTEN and made considerable progress despite the continued intense resistance. By late afternoon the 19th AIB had reached the western outskirts and established contact with the 2d Bn 315th Inf which had been isolated there for several days. Intense house-to-house fighting continued throughout the day, but by the close of the period, elements of the 47th Tk Bn had the town virtually surrounded and just before midnight a considerable portion of the enemy tanks and infantry were observed withdrawing to the Northeast. As in RITTERSHOFFEN, the continued savage resistance came from the 25 PG Division 50/.

4. The long 79th Division front was quiet throughout the period. Elements of the 222d Inf held MAGINOT Line positions Northwest of the HATTEN area, while the 242d and 232d Infs held the line running Southeast towards DRUSENHEIM. Except

49/. WRJ, 13 Jan - Entries #8, 13, 21, 24, 41, 44, 72, 80, 89 and 111; Annex No. 9.

50/. WRJ, 13 Jan - Entries #17, 18, 28, 36, 40, 42, 60, 77, 88, 98, 106 and 112.

DECLASSIFIED
Authority 735017
By NARA, Date 4

for patrol activity, the GAMBSHEIM bridgehead sector was quiet. Elements of the 314th Inf maintained their positions from DRUSENHEIM to the Southwest; the 56th AIB held the defensive line East of ROHRWILLER; and elements of the 94th Cav Rcn Sqdn and the 232d Inf maintained a screen along the rest of the bridgehead rim to the Corps right boundary. CC "B" (-) 12th Armd Division remained in the ROHRWILLER area, behind the line held by its 56th AIB, while the remainder of the 12th Armd Division continued in Corps reserve in the HOCHFELDEN area 51/.

5. Improved visibility made possible a decided increase in close air support for Corps operations. Three missions of 36 sorties bombed and strafed enemy assembly areas and transport in the BITCHE salient, and one mission of six sorties made a supply drop to the isolated battalion in HATTEN. Between 1209A and 1639A, 31 hostile planes (including 18 jet-propelled Me-262s) appeared over the Corps zone on bombing, strafing and reconnaissance missions - principally in the SOULTZ area. One of these enemy planes was destroyed by Corps AA.

6. Seventh Army Operations Instruction No. 59 of this date was received, directing the movement of the 103d Division from the XXI Corps zone and its attachment to VI Corps on arrival; and the movement of Task Force HERREN (as relieved by the 103d Division), one normal combat command, one FA Group and two light FA Bns from VI Corps to the XXI Corps 52/.

7. At 0800A VI Corps Operations Instruction No. 12 had been issued, directing (a) the 12th Armd Division to attack through elements of the 79th Division to destroy enemy forces in the GAMBSHEIM bridgehead, and (b) the 79th Division to assist the armored attack and be prepared to relieve 12th Armd Division elements along the line of the RHINE River 53/.

14 January

1. Activity on the VI Corps front during 14 January followed the pattern of the previous few days. Bitter fighting continued in both RITTERSHOFFEN and HATTEN where the 14th Armd Division made some progress in their attacks to clear the two towns, despite the appearance of elements of the 7 Paratroop Division in that sector as reinforcements for the 21 Panzer and the 25 PG Divisions. One heavy counterattack by enemy infantry supported by flame-throwing tanks nullified some of the gains in HATTEN, but this assault had been contained by the close of the period. The 45th Division made local gains on the rim of the BITCHE salient while considerable regrouping took place on the right half of their front as the 103d Division commenced relief of the Task Force HERREN. Heavy patrol activity was the extent of contact in the enemy bridgehead North of GAMBSHEIM.

2. a. On its left flank the 45th Division continued the attack against the enemy salient Southeast of BITCHE and made some progress against stubborn resistance from the well dug-in elements of the 6 SS Mtn Division, while regrouping continued along the sector from DAMBACH to CLIMBACH in preparation for the relief of Task Force HERREN by the 103d Division. On the western shoulder of the salient, the 179th Inf advanced East to a line Q-761408 - Q-765400 despite stubborn small arms resistance supported by sporadic artillery fire and the numerous anti-personnel mines encountered. On the nose of the salient, the

51/. WRJ, 13 Jan - Entries #42 and 110.

52/. Annex No. 9.

53/. Annex No. 7.

DECLASSIFIED
Authority 73517
NARA, Date 4

180th Inf made little progress in its attack to the North of WILDENGUTH and REIPERTSWILLER against the determined resistance of the 12 SS Mtn Regt which launched an unsuccessful counterattack of an estimated 150 men across the road at Q-774386 shortly after dark. Heavy concentrations of mortar and artillery fire caused these SS troops to withdraw after suffering heavy casualties. The 1st Bn 314th Inf maintained its positions to the right of the 180th Inf while the 1st Bn 315th Inf relieved the 313th Inf (-3d Bn) which began movement to SURBOURG (R-0834) and reverted to control of the 79th Division.

b. On the eastern shoulder of the BITCHE salient, the 157th Inf jumped off on its attack to the Northwest at 0830A against stubborn resistance from elements of the 256 VG Division. Advancing slowly over the heavily-wooded ridges in the sector against resistance of small arms, mortar and artillery fire, the regiment reached the line Q-823384 - Q-828384 on the high ground overlooking the REIPERTSWILLER - OBERMUHLTHAL road. To the right, the 36th Engr C Regt completed relief of the 275th Inf in the OBERMUHLTHAL area, maintained contact with the 157th Inf, and improved its defensive positions. Contact with the enemy was made only by aggressive patrol activity.

c. Hostile activity along the rest of the long Division front, which extended West to points just South of CLIMBACH, was negligible. The 274th and 276th Infs maintained previous positions in the left and center of this Task Force HERREN zone, while on the extreme right flank the 409th Inf (103d Div) had closed in assembly areas at LAMPERTSLOCH (R-0640) and begun relief of the 275th Inf of Task Force HERREN 54/.

3. a. Bitter house-to-house fighting continued in the RITTERSHOFFEN - HATTEN area as the 14th Armd Division renewed its assaults to clear these two towns and restore the MLR of the 79th Division along the MAGINOT Line. CC "A", (with the 3d Bn 315th Inf atchd) resumed the attack on RITTERSHOFFEN at 0900A and had made only minor gains by mid-afternoon after bitter house-to-house fighting against stubborn enemy infantry who were well supported by heavy artillery fire. After an intense concentration of artillery, mortar and automatic weapons fire which had begun at 1300A, the enemy launched another heavy counterattack from the Northeast - infantry supported by flame-throwing tanks jumping off from the strongpoint near the church again. Although the attack was contained with only minor progress, heavy close-in fighting raged in the town throughout the day, and there were indications that the enemy forces in the town had been reinforced by elements of the 7 Paratroop Division.

b. In the HATTEN area, CC "R" jumped off at 0800A and made good progress in clearing the town, after intense house-to-house fighting, until late afternoon. Forward infantry elements of the 62d AIB reached the line R-176339 - R-177335 on the northern outskirts of the town before they were pinned down by heavy small arms, automatic weapons and mortar fire from an estimated battalion of enemy infantry well dug-in on the north bank of the SELZBACH RAU, to the Northeast, between R-171348 and R-179344. A strong counterattack at 2200A by infantry supported by tanks forced a withdrawal from that northern end of the town and heavy fighting was still going on at the close of the period. It was apparent that the enemy had reinforced his infantry elements in this area when prisoners were taken from the 20 Para Regt of the 7 Paratroop Division which appeared to be supporting the 21 Panzer Division. CC "B" retained previous positions between the two zones of attack and supported the attacks of CC "A" and CC "R" by fire 55/.

54/. WRJ, 14 Jan - Entries #9, 16, 37, 49, 61, 71, 78, 86, 95 and 100.

55/. WRJ, 14 Jan - Entries #8, 15, 20, 29, 34, 52, 68, 80, 96 and 98.

DECLASSIFIED
Authority 73017
NARA Date 4

4. The sector of the 79th Division - to the left and right of the 14th Armd Division zone - remained quiet, although outpost positions were strongly held to counteract the vigorous hostile patrols. The 222d Inf and the 242d Inf held MAGINOT Line positions to the West and South of the 14th Armd Division zone, while the 232d Inf (-) extended its line slightly North to include the towns of KAUFFENHEIM (R-2128) and ROESCHWOOG (R-2225). The 314th Inf (-) and CC "B", 12th Armd Division held the line in the DRUSENHEIM and ROHRWILLER areas while the 2d Bn 232d Inf continued to block the WEYERSHEIM - GAMBSHEIM road on the Corps right flank. Enemy activity was limited to harassing artillery fire on the ROHRWILLER area and intense patrolling in the STATTMATTEN (R-195215) area 56/.

5. At 0800A, Operations Instruction No. 13 was issued directing (a) the relief of Task Force HERREN by the 103d Infantry Division and the new boundary between the 45th and 103d Divisions upon completion of the relief; (b) relief of the 79th Division infantry battalions from attachment to the 45th Division and their return to parent unit control; (c) the movement of the 17th FA Gp and the 69th and 93d Armd FA Bns to XXI Corps in conjunction with the move of Task Force HERREN 57/.

6. Operations Instruction No. 14 was issued at 1800A to rescind O.I. No. 11 and to outline the new plan for the Corps withdrawal to the Moder River line - if such a withdrawal should become necessary 58/.

7. Three missions of 36 sorties were flown by XII TAC in close support of VI Corps operations - one mission bombing and strafing a suspected enemy headquarters in the BITCHE salient at Q-772410 while the other two bombed and strafed enemy assembly areas in BUHL (R-199351). Hostile air activity decreased slightly, although approximately fifteen Me-262s (jet-propelled) dropped HE and AP bombs in the WALBOURG (R-0332) - OBERBETSCHDORF (R-1333) area. Corps Artillery concentrated on a heavy counterbattery program to neutralize the intense enemy fire from BAERENTHAL in the BITCHE salient, and to repel the counterattacks in HATTEN and RITTERSHOFFEN.

15 January

1. The attack of the 14th Armd Division to clear the RITTERSHOFFEN - HATTEN area was once again the principal action in the VI Corps area during 15 January. After repulsing half a dozen serious hostile counterattacks, in a day of intense fighting, the 14th Armd Division had regained positions lost in HATTEN the day before and had all but cleared the enemy from the town. The 45th Division made some local gains on the eastern shoulder of the BITCHE salient, hostile pressure having decreased slightly as the enemy appeared to be regrouping his forces. The 12th Armd Division prepared to attack on the morning of 16 January to eliminate the hostile bridgehead North of GAMBSHEIM which had been quiet again throughout the day.

2. a. Following the enemy's futile attempt at infiltration in force across the road at Q-774386 just before the close of 14 January, the BITCHE salient remained generally quiet throughout the day. Definite signs that the German 36 Inf Division had moved Southwest and that the 361 VG Division had assumed command of a good bit of the 6 SS Mtn Division sector indicated that elements of this division, if not the entire division, had been relieved.

56/. WRJ, 14 Jan - Entries #17, 24, 26, 79 and 87.

57/. Annex No. 7.

58/. Annex No. 7.

DECLASSIFIED
Authority 73017
By NARA Date 4

The 179th Inf continued active patrolling with no changes in its positions on the western shoulder of the salient while the 180th Inf regrouped in its positions North of REIPERTSWILLER to accomplish the relief of the 1st Bn 314th Inf which moved to BISCHWILLER and reverted to control of the 79th Division. Considerably more activity took place on the eastern shoulder of the salient. The 1st Bn 315th Inf pushed North against moderate small arms, mortar and artillery fire to reach Q-809389 while to their right, elements of the 157th Inf attacked Northwest against moderate small arms and artillery fire to reach a line Q-813394 - Q-819393 where they repulsed a strong counterattack by troops of the 476 GR heavily supported by mortar and artillery fire. Northwest of OBERMUHLTHAL, left flank elements of the 36th Engr C Regt mopped up scattered groups of enemy from the high ground at Q-843398 and had advanced their line to Q-838401.

b. In the course of the afternoon, the 274th Inf had repulsed two minor probing attacks by the enemy between PHILIPPSBOURG and DAMBACH at 1300A and 1600A after regimental elements had seized and consolidated new positions at Q-878434, directly North of PHILIPPSBOURG. The rest of the long fronts held by the 274th and 276th Infs remained generally quiet throughout the day as defensive positions were maintained and contact established with the enemy by patrols. On the extreme right flank of the 45th Division sector, the 409th Inf (103d Div) completed relief of the 275th Inf and 3d Bn 276th Inf in positions South of CLIMBACH without incident, and the 275th Inf commenced movement to the XXI Corps zone 59/.

3. a. On the Northeastern Corps front, the 14th Armd Division remained in heavy contact with the enemy in the RITTERSHOFFEN - HATTEN area where intense fighting continued through another day. In RITTERSHOFFEN, CC "A" repulsed one small enemy attack from the South at 0800A, knocking out one hostile tank. In general, however, this town was comparatively quiet throughout the day, except for a small outburst of enemy small arms fire at 1730A which was followed by increased mortar and artillery fire from the Northeast.

b. The reinforced enemy in HATTEN continued his aggressive tactics throughout the period. After the heavy enemy attack of the previous night had been contained by 0120A, CC "R" was embroiled in intermittent fire fights during the remaining hours of darkness until 0545A when enemy infantry supported by tanks and flame-throwers launched another attack which was stopped by the 2d Bn 315th Inf by 0630A with the aid of artillery. As CC "R" was preparing to launch an attack at 1500A, an estimated battalion of enemy infantry supported by several tanks counterattacked at 1445A and heavy fighting continued throughout the afternoon as the enemy continued to reinforce his troops from the East with additional elements of the 20 Para Regt, 7 Paratroop Division. When the enemy threatened to overrun elements of the 315th Inf and the 19th AIB, at 1715A, the 47th Tk Bn counterattacked and succeeded in reaching the almost-surrounded infantry troops by 1755A despite hostile bazookas and flame-throwers. Fierce house-to-house fighting raged for several hours, before the armor of the 47th Tk Bn drove the enemy from the south and west ends of the town and finally secured the vital road junction at R-177339 in the east end of HATTEN. By 2100A hostile resistance had slackened and CC "R" was consolidating its positions 60/.

4. In general the sector of the 79th Division remained quiet throughout the period, with the 222d Inf holding defensive positions running Northwest from the 14th Armd Division zone, the 242d Inf holding defensive positions to the South of that same threatened area, while the 314th and 232d Infs and elements

59/. WRJ, 15 Jan - Entries #12, 20, 25, 31, 34, 43, 65, 72, 81, 82, 93 and 94.

60/. WRJ, 15 Jan - Entries #7, 11, 14, 18, 19, 32, 42, 64, 68, 69, 73, 87, 92 and 96.

DECLASSIFIED
Authority 735017
NARA, Date 4

of CC "A" 12th Armd Division held the rim of the enemy bridgehead in the DRUSENHEIM - GAMBSHEIM area where minor patrol clashes took place. The remainder of the 12th Armd Division remained in Corps Reserve in the vicinity of HOCHFELDEN, preparing to attack on 16 January to eliminate the GAMBSHEIM bridgehead 61/.

5. Heavy overcast prevented any close air support, and there was no hostile air activity over the Corps Area during the day. However, Corps artillery fired many observed missions on enemy tanks and personnel and put on a heavy counter-battery program in the HATTEN area. Hostile artillery was moderate and scattered on forward elements, though a concentration of medium artillery fell on KUHLENDORF in the HATTEN area during the morning.

6. At 1700A, Operations Instruction No. 15 was issued, directing (a) the 12th Armd Division to attack on the night 15-16 to clear the hostile bridgehead in the GAMBSHEIM area in accordance with O.I. No. 12 of 13 January and (b) the 79th Division to continue present mission and assist the armored attack, prepared to move into new positions along the RHINE River after the bridgehead had been eliminated 62/.

16 January

1. Only minor changes occurred in the VI Corps front during 16 January after another day of heavy fighting in three separate and distinct sectors. In the 45th Division zone, heavy fighting raged on the eastern shoulder of the BITCHE salient before the 157th Inf successfully repulsed a strong counter-attack by elements of the 6 SS Mtn Division. Enemy pressure in RITTERSHOFFEN slackened slightly, but the 14th Armd Division remained in heavy contact throughout the day in HATTEN and was forced to withdraw slightly in the late afternoon before another heavy hostile assault. The attack of the 12th Armd Division to eliminate the GAMBSHEIM bridgehead got off to a good start in the morning, but blown bridges and heavy enemy AT fire necessitated withdrawals west of the ZORN River during the afternoon.

2. a. In the 45th Division zone, the western shoulder and the nose of the BITCHE salient remained comparatively quiet for another day. On the left flank, the 179th Inf consolidated and strengthened its positions East of ALTHORN and sent out strong combat patrols throughout the day to retain the initiative and keep the enemy on the defensive. At 1900A an hostile 25-man patrol, attempting to overrun the 179th road block at Q-763390, was repulsed and 20 of the enemy killed. In the center, the 180th maintained its line North of WILDENGUTH and REIPERTSWILLER and continued active patrolling to the North. While the 157th Inf was relieving the remaining 315th Inf elements and tieing in its left flank with positions of the 180th Inf during the morning, the regimental right flank was pushed North against only moderate small arms resistance to the ridge at Q-825393. The passive enemy awoke at 1300A, however, with a heavy mortar and artillery concentration on the center of the regimental sector and at 1500A an estimated three-company attack by elements of the 11 SS Regt hit this area. After heavy fighting throughout the afternoon in which these fanatical mountain troops suffered heavy casualties, the 157th had contained the attack by sundown without loss of ground, although some of the enemy had infiltrated and dug in behind positions of the 3d Bn. To the Northeast, the 36th Engr C Regt line East of OBERMUHLTHAL remained quiet as positions were consolidated.

61/. WRJ, 15 Jan - Entries #18, 44 and 95.

62/. Annex No. 7.

DECLASSIFIED
Authority 78017
NARA Date 4

b. The rest of the long division front which extended generally East from BAERENTHAL to LEMBACH remained quiet as the regrouping and relief program continued. From BAERENTHAL to DAMBACH, the 274th Inf repulsed minor local attacks and consolidated its positions in preparation for the coming relief by elements of the 103d Division. After closing in the NIEDERBRONN area early in the afternoon, the 410th Inf (103d Div) completed relief of the 276th Inf which had commenced movement to the XXI Corps zone. The 410th Inf front remained quiet through the rest of the period as did the line of the 409th Inf on the right extending to points just South of CLIMBACH 63/.

3. In the RITTERSHOFFEN - HATTEN area where the 14th Armd Division remained in heavy contact, there were additional indications that the enemy had intended to relieve the badly mauled 21 Panzer and 25 PG Divisions with the fresh 7 Paratroop Division so that he might hold his positions in this salient which he considered very important for a later drive towards HAGUENAU to the Southwest. But the continuing attacks of the 14th Armd Division had made such a relief difficult and costly. Bitter house-to-house fighting raged in RITTERSHOFFEN throughout the day as CC "A" and the 3d Bn 315th Inf continued efforts to clean out the remaining pocket of enemy infantry in the northwestern end of the town without success. Similar, intense close-in fighting took place in HATTEN and an attack at 1500A by CC "R" and the 2d Bn 315th failed to clean out the hostile infantry which had been further reinforced by elements of the 20 Para Regt. At 1710A, an enemy counter-attack of infantry supported by SP guns forced withdrawals to the western end of the town before it had been contained by 2130A. The absence of hostile tanks in these sectors substantiated reports of the heavy materiel casualties suffered by the enemy in previous days 64/.

4. In the 79th Division sector, the 222d and 242d Infs held their MAGINOT Line positions to the left and right of the 14th Armd Division on fronts that were quiet except for the slightly increased hostile patrol activity. However, on the RHINE River front of the 232d Inf there were indications that the enemy was reinforcing his narrow corridor along the west banks of the river, North of the GAMBSHEIM - HERRLISHEIM - DRUSENHEIM bridgehead area. Elements of the 232d Inf, supported by the 781st Tk Bn engaged an enemy group of 60-80 troops of Bn THOMAS moving North from DALHUNDEN (R-1819) to DENGOLSHEIM (R-1821) and killed an estimated half of them. The enemy became increasingly aggressive after dark with strong patrolling in the heavy woods West of FORSTFELD (R-2229) and considerable mortar and small arms fire was directed in the vicinity of ROESCHWOOG (R-2225). The 1st Bn 314th Inf closed in OBERHOFFEN (R-0920) at 0520A and the 1st Bn 315th Inf closed at R-1536, South of HOFFEN, at 1600A and reverted to control of the 79th Division 65/.

5. a. On the Corps right flank the coordinated attack of the 12th Armd Division to eliminate the hostile bridgehead in the GAMBSHEIM - HERRLISHEIM area jumped off on schedule, but was halted short of the objective by intense enemy resistance of AT guns and blown bridges. At 0200A, CC "B" attacked South from ROHRWILLER towards HERRLISHEIM and OFFENDORF and elements of the 56th AIB had reached the railroad junction at R-137159 against moderate opposition before they were stopped by heavy small arms and automatic weapons fire of an hostile counterattack forming up at R-1416. Though this enemy attack was quickly dispersed by artillery fire, the 56th AIB withdrew to ROHRWILLER early in the afternoon to reorganize. Elements remained behind to outpost the bridge site over the ZORN River at R-130168, but continued heavy hostile artillery prevented con-

63/. WRJ, 16 Jan - Entries #16, 17, 41, 50, 76, 79, 80, 95, 106, 120, 122, 127 and 134.

64/. WRJ, 16 Jan - Entries #39, 49, 77, 86, 104, 117 and 123.

65/. WRJ, 16 Jan - Entries #15, 17, 21, 38, 45, 57, 78, 108 and 119.

DECLASSIFIED
Authority 73517
NARA, Date 4/

struction of a heavy bridge which would enable the armor of the 714th Tk Bn to cross the river and support the attack, so no further progress was made.

b. To the South, CC "A" made considerably more progress, but was also stopped short of its objective. After assembling in WEYERSHEIM at 0603A, this second column attacked East towards GAMBSHEIM. The 17th AIB and the 43d Tk Bn crossed the ZORN River and reached the railroad at R-1213, about a mile West of OFFENDORF, before they were forced to withdraw for lack of protection on the left flank, hostile AT guns located just West of HERRLISHEIM having knocked out ten tanks. To the right, the 66th AIB had advanced along the road to GAMBSHEIM during the morning until halted by heavy enemy fire 400 yards West of STAINWALD (R-1011), to the Northwest of GAMBSHEIM. The attack was renewed at 1630A to clear the enemy from these woods, but continued stubborn resistance of heavy small arms and automatic weapons fire forced a withdrawal West of the ZORN River 66/.

6. Eight missions of 93 sorties were flown during the day in close support of VI Corps operations. Enemy concentrations and installations in OFFENDORF and the STAINWALD were bombed and strafed by 56 of these planes while the rest bombed and strafed EBERBACH (R-2436), TRIMBACH (R-2138) and NIEDERROEDERN (R-2334) where the enemy was building up to reinforce his troops in the HATTEN area. Hostile air activity was limited to three Me-262s bombing and strafing rear areas of the 14th Armd Division and two Me-109s on reconnaissance missions in the HAGUENAU area. Corps artillery concentrated its efforts on preparation and counter-battery fires in the zone of the attack by the 12th Armd Division.

17 January

1. While heavy fighting in the RITTERSHOFFEN - HATTEN area continued throughout 17 January, there were indications that the enemy might be dissatisfied with his progress in that zone and be preparing for a breakthrough on the right flank of the 79th Division sector, when the remaining two regiments of the 7 Paratroop Division were identified in the SESSENHEIM - ROESCHWOOG area. In view of this continued hostile build-up and the probability of another major enemy effort, the 36th Infantry Division was attached to VI Corps during the period and had begun movement from the XV Corps zone. Elsewhere on the VI Corps front, there was little change in dispositions; the 45th Division remained in close contact in the BITCHE salient, and the 12th Armd Division made only minor gains in its attack to eliminate the GAMBSHEIM bridgehead.

2. On the 45th Division front, the enemy continued to maintain his heaviest pressure on the eastern shoulder of the BITCHE salient, where he had made some successful infiltration of 157th Inf positions the previous day. This same area also received the bulk of the estimated 1000 rounds of mixed-caliber artillery fire which fell on division positions throughout the period. After the 36th Division had finally relieved elements of the 179th Inf still within the XV Corps boundary, that regiment continued to readjust and improve its line East of ALTHORN on the western shoulder of the enemy's salient and maintained contact by strong patrols. On the nose of the salient, the 180th Inf made several minor local attacks to improve positions, but forward elements were forced to make slight withdrawals during the afternoon when they were subjected to heavy artillery, mortar, small arms and automatic weapons fire. On the eastern shoulder of the salient, elements of the 157th Inf made little progress in their attack to extend the right flank in the face of heavy small arms, mortar and machine gun fire while the bulk of the regiment was engaged in mopping up troops of the 11 SS Mtn Regt who had infiltrated and dug in behind their positions the previous

66/. WRJ, 16 Jan - Entries #2, 4, 19, 22, 29, 34, 43, 47, 48, 69, 81 and 93.

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By NARA Date 4

day. To the right of the 157th, the 36th Engr C Regt continued to improve positions in the high ground Northwest of OBERMUHLTHAL and pushed patrols to the ridges at Q-835397 and Q-835406 67/.

3. With the arrival of the 411th Inf in the NIEDERBRONN area, the movement of the 103d Division into the VI Corps area was completed and the Division Commander took over that part of the 45th Division sector, running east from BAERENTHAL to LEMBACH at 2030A. After the Corps Commander had obtained verbal authority from the Army Commander to retain the 274th Inf as a reserve, that regiment was attached to the 103d Division in position and its relief by the 411th Inf postponed. The division sector, held from West to East by the 274th, 410th and 409th Infs remained quiet throughout the period 68/.

4. The enemy continued to defend his holdings in RITTERSHOFFEN and HATTEN, with increased stubbornness, and supplemented his defense with limited aggressive infantry action supported by ten tanks, so the 14th Armd Division and attached 315th Inf remained locked in bitter fighting throughout the day. While CC "A" and the 3d Bn 315th Inf remained heavily engaged in RITTERSHOFFEN, the 1st Bn 315th Inf moved from reserve positions and attacked the town from the Northwest at 0630A, making some minor gains in that section of the town as a result of the surprise element of the assault. But after a day of heavy house-to-house fighting against an enemy employing small arms, automatic weapons, mortar and artillery fire, there had been little change in the lines within the town. A mile to the East, CC "R" and the 2d Bn 315th renewed their heavy fighting in HATTEN where the enemy continued to employ considerable armor despite his recent heavy losses, and launched two strong counterattacks during the day by elements of the 20 Para Regt supported by ten tanks believed to be of the 21 Panzer Division. The first hostile attack came from the Northeast at 0730A and the second from the Southeast at 1130A, but by the end of the period both had been contained and CC "R" had well organized positions in the western half of HATTEN. Tanks of CC "B" supported fires of the other two combat commands 69/.

5. While the zone of the 222d Inf along the MAGINOT Line to the Northwest of RITTERSHOFFEN remained generally quiet, activity flared up along the rest of the 79th Division front extending generally South from HATTEN to DRUSENHEIM. Identification of the remainder of the 20 Para Regt and elements of both the 19 and 21 Para Regts of the 7 Paratroop Division in the enemy's narrow corridor along the west bank of the RHINE indicated that the enemy was dissatisfied with his progress in the HATTEN area and might be preparing to break through this flank. Shortly after dawn an estimated two companies of enemy crossed the MODER River at DAHLHUNDEN (R-1819) and attacked North to break through positions of the 232d Inf and capture DENGOLSHEIM (R-185212), STATTMATTEN (R-1921) and the southern end of SESSENHEIM (R-180225) where they immediately began digging in at 1100A. The 1st Bn 314th Inf which had been alerted, attacked East from SCHIRRHOFFEN (R-1423) and by 1500A had driven this enemy force from SESSENHEIM and captured three officers and 24 men from the 21 Para Regt. A considerable increase in hostile movement and patrol activity near AUENHEIM (R-2024) and ROESCHWOOG (R-2225) was observed in the afternoon and the 1st Bn 314th Inf had closed in SOUFFLENHEIM (R-1725) to meet this threat by the end of the period 70/.

67/. WRJ, 17 Jan - Entries #16, 20, 56, 68, 92 and 146.

68/. WRJ, 17 Jan - Entries #30, 55, 88, 112, 118, 127 and 133.

69/. WRJ, 17 Jan - Entries #19, 26, 33, 51, 54, 57, 67, 73, 100 and 114.

70/. WRJ, 17 Jan - Entries #13, 18, 41, 51, 54, 65, 84, 91, 102 and 134.

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Authority 73517
By NARA, Date 4

6. The 12th Armd Division continued its attempts to eliminate the GAMBSHEIM - DRUSENHEIM bridgehead and made considerably more progress despite failing to take the objective. The 56th AIB attacked East from ROHRWILLER at 0115A and established a bridgehead East of the ZORN River, but hostile artillery continued to delay construction of a bridge to allow armor of the 714th Tk Bn to cross, so another withdrawal to positions just West of the river was made shortly after nightfall. The vital bridge was finally constructed and ready for use at 1800A, but no further attacks were made during the remainder of the period. Considerably more progress was made by the Division's southern prong. The 17th AIB and the 43d Tk Bn jumped off to the Northeast in the early hours and succeeded in entering the outskirts of HERRLISHEIM where approximately 200 prisoners were taken before noon after heavy street fighting. Meanwhile, the 66th AIB and the 23d Tk Bn had attacked towards OFFENDORF and met continued, heavy anti-tank fire from the STAINWALD - Northwest of GAMBSHEIM. Subsequently, this column turned to the North and had reached the southeastern outskirts of HERRLISHEIM where they were establishing positions just as the enemy launched a 200-man counterattack supported by 6-8 tanks and SP guns. Although this hostile assault had been halted by artillery fire before 1600A, stiff fighting continued in the town throughout the period and the enemy had infiltrated tanks and infantry behind the positions of these 12th Armd Division elements to leave the situation obscure at the close of the period.71/.

7. The heavy overcast and light snowfall during the day prevented any air activity - either friendly or hostile. However, numerous missions observed by ground OPs were fired by Corps Artillery with good effect on hostile counterattacks, and many unobserved missions were fired on enemy batteries harassing front lines positions - particularly those on the front of the 157th Inf. The 93d Armd FA Bn completed movement to the XXI Corps zone and was relieved of attachment to VI Corps.

8. Seventh Army Operations Instruction No. 61 of this date was received to confirm previous verbal instructions - authorizing VI Corps to retain the one normal armored combat command which had been scheduled for movement to XXI Corps zone by O.I. No. 59. Seventh Army Operations Instruction No. 62 - also confirming verbal orders - authorized VI Corps to retain the 274th Inf (Task Force Herren) until further notice; and directed the movement of the 36th Division (-141st RCT) to the VI Corps sector 72/.

18 January

1. VI Corps troops remained in heavy contact in the same three vital areas during 18 January - the salient Southeast of BITCHE, the RITTERSHOFFEN - HATTEN zone and the GAMBSHEIM bridgehead - but the heaviest enemy pressure of the day appeared in the SESSENHEIM area where the enemy seemed to be probing for a weak spot through which to launch a major attack. In view of his reversion to defensive tactics and his withdrawals in the HATTEN area; further identification of 7 Paratroop Division and initial identification of the 10 SS Panzer Division along the narrow corridor west of the RHINE; and increased aggressiveness in the SESSENHEIM - DRUSENHEIM area it appeared that the enemy was dissatisfied with his progress in his other salients and intended making

71/. WRJ, 17 Jan - Entries #8, 15, 42, 66, 76, 89, 94 and 120.

72/. Annex No. 9.

DECLASSIFIED
Authority 735017
By NARA Date 4

a major thrust from this new zone towards BISCHWILLER and HAGUENAU.

2. On the left half of the 45th Division sector, the 179th (-) and 180th Inf Regts maintained and improved their same positions on the western shoulder and nose of the BITCHE salient throughout a quiet day. Only by aggressive patrol activity did these two regiments maintain contact with elements of the 257 VG and 6 SS Mtn Division whose attitude was strictly defensive. However, on the eastern shoulder of the salient, the 157th Inf remained in heavy contact with the aggressive 11 SS Mtn Regt which had attacked in the early hours and cut off the greater part of the 3d Bn on the high ground at Q-815395. To relieve these encircled troops, the rest of the regiment attacked North in the morning, but made only little progress over the rough terrain against the heavy small arms and automatic weapons fire from enemy positions on the high ground at Q-823387. To the North, a diversionary movement by elements of the 36th Engr C Regt to distract hostile attention from the encircled battalion met similarly strong resistance of artillery, mortar, machine gun and small arms fire. To the South, the attached 2d Bn 179th Inf made better progress to reach a line Q-813387 - Q-823383 and mop up some of the infiltrating enemy, but had not relieved the surrounded troops. Hostile artillery and mortar fire was heavy in the entire regimental sector throughout the period. At 1300A, the 2d Bn 411th Inf (103d Div) had closed in assembly area at ROTHBACH (Q-836345), attached to the 45th Division as a reserve 73/.

3. For one more day, the long sector of the 103d Division, extending from the high ground North of PHILLIPSBOURG to the ridges North of DRACHENBRONN (R-096430), remained quiet, with activity limited to strong patrolling. This line from West to East was held by the attached 274th Inf (TF HERREN), the 409th and the 410th (-) Inf Regts. In view of the absence of any threat in this divisional zone the 1st Bn 410th Inf had been moved to assembly area in BOIS DE SOUFFLENHEIM (R-1521) at 0830A and attached to the 79th Division. Later in the day, the reserve 411th Inf (-) had been attached to the 79th Division and had been assembled in SCHIRRHOFFEN (R-1322) by 1700A to provide a reserve and a counter-attacking force against the impending heavy enemy attack in that zone 74/.

4. While the 14th Armd Division and the attached 315th Inf remained in heavy contact in the RITTERSHOFFEN - HATTEN area throughout the period, enemy aggressiveness decreased and there were indications that he was withdrawing his strength from this area for displacement to the South to support the attack in the SESSENHEIM area. In RITTERSHOFFEN, CC "A" with the two attached battalions of the 315th Inf made some progress, to clean out the enemy strongpoint in the church during the afternoon, but met continued resistance from the cemetery area. Sporadic outbursts of house-to-house fighting went on in the town throughout the day. In HATTEN, CC "R" and the 2d Bn 315th Inf held their previous positions, embroiled in similar sporadic close-in fighting, and repulsed one minor counter-attack of infantry supported by several tanks which were so cleverly camouflaged to blend with the snow-covered terrain that they were invisible beyond 150 yards. Both the 125 and 192 PGRs were identified in this area, but there were indications of a withdrawal of the bulk of this armor to the SESSENHEIM area to the South 75/.

73/. WRJ, 18 Jan - Entries #9, 19, 23, 30, 36, 48, 58, 80, 85, 115 and 124.

74/. WRJ, 18 Jan - Entries #12, 46, 55 and 88.

75/. WRJ, 18 Jan - Entries #16, 18, 57, 101, 102, 108 and 119.

DECLASSIFIED
Authority 73517
NARA Date 4

5. While the 222d Inf continued to maintain MAGINOT Line positions of the 79th Division front West of HATTEN with no more than light patrol contact, activity flared up along the rest of the Division sector, particularly in the SESSENHEIM - DRUSENHEIM area where it appeared that the enemy was getting set to make a full-scale offensive. Further identification of 7 Paratroop Division troops indicated that the entire division was in this area and identification of prisoners taken in a minor attack on ROHRWILLER as being from the 22 PGR indicated that the 10 SS Panzer Division was moving into the hostile belt along the west bank of the RHINE. An enemy attack of an estimated two companies supported by two or three tanks succeeded in breaking through positions of the 232d Inf in the morning and taking the town of SESSENHEIM and two pillboxes to the South at R-179209 by 1000A. During the afternoon these same troops of the 19 Para Regt attacked South to capture most of the wooded area in the vicinity of R-1720, and a counterattack by the attached 1st Bn 410th Inf from SOUFFLENHEIM to restore these positions was stopped by heavy small arms and automatic weapons fire along the line R-165205 - R-178209. Throughout the day increased hostile troop and vehicular movement was observed in ROPPENHEIM, ROESCHWOOG and DENGOLSHEIM. On the division's southern flank, held by the 314th Inf along the line ROHRWILLER - DRUSENHEIM, enemy patrol activity increased throughout the day and a two-platoon raid was made on ROHRWILLER at 2200A and repulsed only after a sharp fire fight. Shortly before midnight an estimated three companies had infiltrated the regimental right flank and were attacking ROHRWILLER from the Southwest 76/.

6. The HERRLISHEIM area remained the scene of heaviest activity throughout the day in the sector of the 12th Armd Division. The hostile pressure which had started in the closing hours of 17 January continued throughout the night and between 0200A and 0300A an estimated battalion of the 2 SS Police Regt, supported by several tanks, attacked HERRLISHEIM after a heavy artillery concentration and cut off the 43d Tk Bn East of the town. By dawn, the 17th AIB had been forced to withdraw from the corner of HERRLISHEIM they had held as the enemy increased his pressure with heavy small arms, mortar, and automatic weapons fire, supported by artillery. After its attack to the North to relieve the elements in HERRLISHEIM had been halted by heavy resistance, the 66th AIB withdrew to defensive positions along the ZORN River and held the line R-078111 - R-111150 with the 23d Tk Bn. CC "B" remained on the left flank, in defensive positions in the ROHRWILLER area, and at the close of the period the 56th AIB was heavily engaged with the same hostile force which was attacking the right flank of the 314th Inf in ROHRWILLER 77/.

7. By 1700A the 143d Inf had closed in the HAGUENAU area and one battalion had been immediately moved to BISCHWILLER to meet the threat developing in ROHRWILLER. The remainder of the 36th Division had begun movement to the VI Corps area late in the period, after the Army Commander had released the entire unit to Corps for movement as quickly as possible 78/.

8. Continued bad weather prevented any air activity in close support of VI Corps, but four Me-109s and five FW-190s appeared over the BISCHWILLER area in mid-afternoon on reconnaissance and strafing missions. Hostile artillery was light to moderate during the day, and Corps artillery concentrated on observed missions on enemy tanks, personnel and batteries, particularly in the HATTEN and GAMBSHEIM bridgehead areas.

76/. WRJ, 18 Jan - Entries #16, 34, 44, 59, 81, 87, 101, 106, 112 and 131.

77/. WRJ, 18 Jan - Entries #11, 17, 26, 32, 49, 51, 60, 67, 103 and 125.

78/. WRJ, 18 Jan - Entry #79.

DECLASSIFIED
Authority 73517
By NARA Date 4

19 January

1. From all indications, the long threatened all-out enemy offensive got underway during 19 January, and appeared to be directed towards HAGUENAU with a view to cutting off VI Corps elements in the Northeast corner of the Corps sector - the RITTERSHOFFEN - HATTEN area. The hostile build-up along the west banks of the RHINE from HERRLISHEIM North to ROESCHWOOG and ROPPENHEIM over the previous several days culminated in a heavy offensive by the 7 Paratroop and 10 SS Panzer Division on the right flank of the 79th Division and the main line of the 12th Armd Division. While pressure in the BITCHE salient and the HATTEN area remained heavy throughout the day, contact was considerably lighter than it had been in anytime during the previous week. Despite heavy materiel and personnel losses, the enemy forces made such considerable progress along the line GAMBSHEIM - HERRLISHEIM - DRUSENHEIM - SESSENHEIM in his attack towards BISCHWILLER and HAGUENAU that tentative plans were made for the withdrawal of VI Corps to the MODER River line.

2. In the 45th Division sector, both the western shoulder and the nose of the enemy's BITCHE salient remained comparatively quiet. Both the 179th Inf (-) on the left and the 180th Inf in the center improved their positions while maintaining active patrols to their fronts, as divisional engineer elements laid minefields in front of these positions which remained generally quiet throughout the day. In contrast was the sector on the eastern shoulder of the salient where the 157th Inf remained in heavy contact. Though still isolated by the infiltrating 11 SS Mtn Regt, the 3d Bn maintained its positions on the high ground at Q-815395, about three miles Northeast of REIPERTSWILLER, while the rest of the regiment, with the 2d Bn 179th attached, continued its attack towards objectives at Q-825393 and Q-810390 in an effort to contact the isolated troops. Two hostile counterattacks - at 0800A and 1125A - were repulsed after heavy fighting, but the enemy continued to cover 157th positions with heavy mortar and artillery fire. Late in the afternoon, the distance between the isolated battalion and the main regimental positions had been lessened to 400 yards, but continued bitter resistance from the well dug-in mountain troops, employing small arms and automatic weapons, prevented a junction. To the North, the 36th Engr C Regt supported the attack of the 157th Inf by probing attacks towards Hill 403 (Q-835403) and reached Q-838408. The attached 2d Bn 411th Inf remained in reserve in the ROTHBACH area 79/.

3. The sector of the 103d Division remained the quietest part of the Corps front. Enemy activity was limited to a few scattered patrols with the apparent intention of taking some prisoners for interrogation, and only a few small arms fights occurred throughout the period along the line held by the 274th Inf, the 410th Inf and the 409th Inf 80/.

4. Although the 14th Armd Division remained in heavy contact in the RITTERSHOFFEN - HATTEN area, the situation in that critical area became less tense, as the enemy appeared to have shifted his interests to other sectors of the Corps front. RITTERSHOFFEN remained comparatively quiet, although the enemy remained alert and stubbornly defensive in holding an afternoon attack of CC "A" to only minor gains while continuing to hold the northern end of the town. However, heavy fighting continued in HATTEN where the 21 Panzer Division launched a three-pronged attack - from the Northeast, East and Southeast - at 0800A, employing infantry supported by mortar, artillery and tank fire. After this as-

79/. WRJ, 19 Jan - Entries #20, 36, 56, 80, 85, 98, 120, 142, 163, 171 and 186.

80/. WRJ, 19 Jan - Entries #141 and 185.

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sault had been contained by 0900A, the situation became quiet until almost noon when another strong counterattack of infantry supported by several tanks hit positions of CC "R", and made minor progress. By mid-afternoon this effort had died down without making any major inroads on defensive positions and the town remained relatively quiet throughout the remainder of the period, except for sniper fire and sporadic concentrations of mortar and artillery fire by which the enemy was trying to burn out the corner of the town held by the 14th Armd Division. Though the enemy had suffered severe personnel and materiel casualties in his effort to break through in this sector, the similarly weakened condition of the 14th Armd Division, and the absence of reinforcements forestalled a major attack to eliminate the hostile salient and restore original MAGINOT Line positions. In view of the more serious threat to the South, the 25th Tk Bn was moved from this sector late in the period and came under Corps control in the HOCHFELDEN area 81/.

5. The continued hostile build-up on the right flank of the 79th Division sector had brought about a critical situation as renewed attacks by the bulk of the 7 Paratroop Division and elements of the 10 SS Panzer Division in the SESSENHEIM - DRUSENHEIM area threatened to break through to HAGUENAU and cut off the 14th Armd Division and elements of the 79th Division to the Northeast. At 0530A the attached 3d Bn 411th Inf made good early progress in its eastward attack to reoccupy SESSENHEIM and had reached the northwestern outskirts in two hours against moderate opposition. However, when the advance to clear out the town continued, intense fighting developed as the 19 Para Regt defended from the eastern end, supported by Mark V and Mark VI tanks. This enemy armor knocked out the six tanks supporting the 411th Inf attack and forced a withdrawal to the BOIS DE SOUFFLENHEIM. Efforts of attached elements of the 410th Inf, attacking North in the BOIS DE SESSENHEIM, met similarly strong resistance from paratroopers supported by tank and artillery fire and made only minor gains. However, the more critical area developed to the South where the enemy had built up a large force in the southern part of DRUSENHEIM. An estimated two battalions of hostile infantry supported by six to eight tanks attacked the town from the Northeast, South and Southwest at 1830A, and by 2100A the town and the 2d Bn 314th Inf had been surrounded, as enemy armor cut exits to the Northwest of DRUSENHEIM. The thrust from the South had penetrated positions of the 3d Bn and forced a withdrawal to the West to block the DRUSENHEIM - ROHRWILLER road. Sixty members of the encircled battalion had managed to infiltrate through the enemy lines during the night as plans were being made to relieve this unit the next morning 82/.

6. An even more serious situation developed South of DRUSENHEIM in the sector of the 12th Armd Division where the 10 SS Panzer Division attacked in conjunction with the assault of the 7 Paratroop Division. After several small scale attacks in the morning and early afternoon had been repulsed, the aggressive enemy finally made substantial progress in the late afternoon. At 1630A hostile infantry supported by ten tanks secured and crossed the bridge at R-087120 on the GAMBSHEIM - WEYERSHEIM road, although artillery immediately knocked out eight of these tanks. Fifteen minutes later an estimated 200 infantry supported by 17 tanks crossed the ZORN River at HERRLISHEIM and attacked Northwest towards ROHRWILLER, and at 1715A, 400 infantry supported by another 17 tanks crossed the bridge at R-087120. Although TD and artillery fire knocked

81/. WRJ, 19 Jan - Entries #21, 30, 32, 37, 42, 63, 77, 88 and 143.

82/. WRJ, 19 Jan - Entries #27, 32, 44, 45, 61, 65, 76, 84, 110, 147, 150 and 168.

DECLASSIFIED
Authority 73517
By NARA Date 4

out 27 of these enemy tanks during the battle, the 12th Armd Division was forced to fall back to a general defensive line along the KESSELGRABEN and EICHGRABEN Rivers. No further contact had been made with the 43d Tk Bn which had been lost East of HERRLISHEIM the previous day 83/.

7. To meet this threat, the 36th Division (-141st RCT) which was just assembling within the Corps sector during the day was quickly moved to this zone to relieve the 12th Armd Division and had assumed command of the sector at 2100A. The 143d Inf established positions along the western banks of the KESSELGRABEN and EICHGRABEN Rivers, while the 142d Inf moved into reserve positions in the BISCHWILLER - KURTZENHAUSEN - GRIES area. The 636th TD Bn (-) was attached to the 36th Division and the 443d AAA AW Bn (-) was attached to the 35th AAA Brigade and put in support of this sector 84/.

8. Improved weather conditions made possible a heavy air program in close support of VI Corps - sixteen missions of 190 sorties dropping more than 100 tons of bombs, primarily on the hostile concentrations in the HERRLISHEIM - OFFENDORF area, with good results. Despite the good weather, hostile aviation did not support the enemy attack in this area, only three Me-109s on reconnaissance missions appearing over the Corps sector throughout the day. While enemy artillery was limited to harassing missions over the entire front and occasional concentrations in support of his attacks, Corps artillery concentrated generally against the attack from HERRLISHEIM and GAMBSHEIM with good results on hostile armor.

9. At 1200A, Operations Instruction No. 16 had been issued: (a) outlining divisional attachments; (b) directing the 45th and 79th Divisions to continue their present missions; (c) directing the 36th Division to assemble in Corps Reserve, prepared to attack on Corps order through positions of the 12th Armd Division to eliminate the hostile force in the DRUSENHEIM - HERRLISHEIM area; (d) directing the 12th Armd Division to defend along its present line and assemble in reserve after being relieved by the 36th Division, and (e) directing the 14th Armd Division (less one combat command to remain in RITTERSHOFFEN) to assemble in the WOERTH area 85/.

10. At 1800A, Operations Instruction No. 17 was issued directing generally: (a) the 36th Division to immediately relieve the 12th Armd Division and defend the line ROHRWILLER to bridge (R-087120); and (b) the 12th Armd Division to assemble in reserve at HOCHFELDEN, prepared to counterattack to the Southeast, East, or North 86/.

11. At 2200A, Operations Instruction No. 18 was issued FOR PLANNING PURPOSES ONLY, outlining the proposed withdrawal of VI Corps to the line VOLKSBERG (Q-6838) - WIMMENAU (Q-7635) - HAGUENAU (R-0424) - BISCHWILLER (R-0918) - WEYERSHEIM (R-0513) 87/.

83/. WRJ, 19 Jan - Entries #10, 12, 34, 43, 46, 53, 70, 76, 79, 83, 87, 97, 100, 108, 111, 134, 139, 147, 150, 159 and 182.

84/. WRJ, 19 Jan - Entries #14, 64, 112, 113, 119, 148, 167, 170 and 183.

85/. Annex No. 7.

86/. Annex No. 7.

87/. Annex No. 7.

DECLASSIFIED
Authority 73517
By NARA Date 4

20 January

1. After many days of heavy contact throughout the month, the Corps front became relatively quiet during 20 January as hostile activity in the three critical zones - (the BITCHE salient, HATTEN and the HERRLISHEIM - DRUSENHEIM area) declined sharply. Apparently the enemy forces were reorganizing and recuperating from their heavy personnel and materiel losses suffered during the heavy fighting of the previous few days. However, authority was received from the Army Commander for a withdrawal to the MODER River line at the discretion of the Corps Commander since the VI Corps divisions were lacking reinforcements, reserves were not available, and it was felt that the Corps could better defend against the renewed all-out enemy offensive for which the hostile forces appeared to be regrouping during this quiet day. Instructions were issued that the withdrawal would be completed by 0730A on 21 January and as this period ended the retrograde movement was proceeding on schedule despite the slick conditions of the snow-covered roads which made traffic of tracked vehicles particularly hazardous.

2. Activity in the 45th Division sector again centered on the zone of the 157th Inf where continued efforts were made to relieve the encircled 3d Bn. The remainder of the regiment, with the attached battalion of the 179th Inf, resumed the attack North at 0725A against the eastern shoulder of the BITCHE salient but made little progress over the rough terrain against heavy small arms and machine gun fire by the hostile troops dug in behind the 3d Bn positions. To the left of this attack, the attached 2d Bn 411th Inf met similarly stubborn resistance supported by moderate artillery fire and could make no progress in its efforts to join up with the isolated troops. Subsequently, the isolated 3d Bn was ordered to attack South after dark to regain contact with the main body - after it was decided to yield their positions along the ridges. There were no changes on the nose and western shoulder of the enemy salient as the 180th and 179th Infs continued to maintain heavy pressure on hostile troops by strong patrol activities. On the division right flank, the 36th Engr C Regt began withdrawal in accordance with O.I. No. 18, leaving only a small screen covering its previous positions, and as the period closed the 2d Bn 411th had commenced movement to an assembly area at KIRRWILLER (Q-8524) to revert to control of the 103d Division 88/.

3. For another day, the front of the 103d Division remained quiet with no hostile activity of any sort reported, as some regrouping of battalions took place. Late in the period, the division began its withdrawal movement to the line ROTHBACH - NIEDERMODERN in accordance with O.I. No. 18.

4. After the week of heavy fighting, an unusual lull existed over the fronts of the 79th and 14th Armd Divisions. There was no aggressive hostile activity throughout the day in the heretofore critical HATTEN area and activity in SESSENHEIM and DRUSENHEIM, on the 79th Division right flank, was negligible, although a battalion of the 314th Inf remained surrounded in the latter town. The enemy appeared to be regrouping and reorganizing after his heavy casualties of the few previous days. At 1800A, CC "A" of the 14th Armd Division was attached to the 79th Division to cover the withdrawal of the Division to the HAGUENAU position, and the remainder of the 14th Armd Division commenced movement to DETTWILLER to become Corps Reserve. Late in the period, the 79th Division began regrouping and commenced withdrawal to the new MLR NIEDERMODERN - BISCHWILLER in accordance with O.I. No. 18 and the 411th Inf (-) was relieved of attachment and began movement to the 103d Division sector 89/.

88/. WRJ, 20 Jan - Entries #23, 25, 36, 49, 54, 60, 66, 68, 90, 92, 101 and 132.

89/. WRJ, 20 Jan - Entries #4, 22, 24, 25, 43, 44, 67, 69, 72, 100, 101, 115 and 128.

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Authority 735017
By NARA Date 4

5. After completion of its relief by the 36th Division, the 12th Armd Division (-) moved to assembly areas in NIEDERSCHAEFFOLSHEIM (R-0019), SCHWEIGHAUSEN (Q-9924), WINGERSHEIM (Q-9213) and WALTENHEIM (Q-9216) in Corps Reserve. The 23d and 714th Tk Bns remained in position, in support of the 36th Division 90/.

6. In sharp contrast with the previous few days, the enemy showed no aggressive inclinations on the GAMBSHEIM - HERRLISHEIM - DRUSENHEIM front which had been taken over by the 36th Division. Hostile activity was limited to one half-hearted attack by an estimated 150 infantry on positions of the 143d Inf West of HERRLISHEIM, and by several subsequent combat patrol raids. The 143d Inf held the Division front from ROHRWILLER to the Corps right boundary while the 142d RCT remained in reserve 91/.

7. At 1200A, Operations Instruction No. 19 was issued, to make some minor changes in O.I. No. 18, and directing the 36th and 103d Divisions to maintain mobile reserves of one infantry battalion each, prepared to move on two-hour notice on Corps order only. At 2200A, Operations Instruction No. 20 was issued to direct the 45th and 103d Divisions to defend along delaying position SARREINSBURG - ROTHBACH - NIEDERMODERN instead of continuing withdrawal to the HAGUENAU line 92/.

8. Seventh Army Operations Instructions Nos. 63 of 19 January and 64 and 65 of this date were received. No. 63 directed XV Corps to move the remaining RCT (141st) of the 36th Division to the VI Corps area, and directed VI Corps to assemble one armored division in the SAVERNE - WASSELONE area to revert to Army control. No. 64 directed the movement and attachment to VI Corps of the 939th and 693d FA Bns. No. 65 confirmed earlier verbal instructions, authorizing VI Corps to withdraw to the ROTHBACH - NIEDERMODERN - HAGUENAU - BISCHWILLER line at the discretion of the Corps Commander 93/.

21 January

1. The planned withdrawal to the new MLR along the line ALTHORN - ROTHBACH - NIEDERMODERN - HAGUENAU - BISCHWILLER was smoothly continued during the early hours of darkness on 21 January and completed by morning on schedule despite the icy conditions of the roads. CC "A", 14th Armd Division covered the movement of the 79th Division from the critical Northeast corner of the Corps zone, while the withdrawals from the rest of the front were screened by small infantry units who completed all demolitions as scheduled. The smoothness with which this movement was made was evidenced when contact was completely broken and only small hostile patrols appeared in the vacated areas throughout the day. By the close of the period, VI Corps divisions were well established along the ROTHBACH RAU and MODER River and substantial reserves had been assembled to meet the expected continuation of the enemy efforts to retake ALSACE. The only hostile activity took place on the right flank front where the 10 SS Panzer Division continued heavy probing attempts to find a weak spot in this sector which was now held by the 36th Division, from BISCHWILLER to the right boundary.

90/. WRJ, 20 Jan - Entries #2, 25, 58 and 117.

91/. WRJ, 20 Jan - Entries #1, 21, 25, 37, 62, 71 and 116.

92/. Annex No. 7.

93/. Annex No. 9.

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Authority 735017
NARA Date 4

2. Although scattered artillery fire continued to fall on the western and central sectors of the 45th Division front and the enemy remained sensitive to patrol activity, the withdrawal on this left flank of the Corps was effected without incident. While the 179th Inf maintained its previous positions, the 180th Inf pulled back slightly to establish a new line between Q-783382 and Q-814371 on the WILDENGUTH road. During the night the 157th Inf had relieved its encircled 3d Bn and the regiment had pulled back to the WILDENGUTH - ROTHBACH road while the 36th Engr C Regt withdrew on the right flank and had established positions on the line Q-833380 - Q-838374 during the day. After dark, the 36th Engrs completed withdrawal to the WILDENGUTH - ROTHBACH road and were digging in on the line Q-814371 - Q-842350 by 2000A. Late in the period, the 157th Inf was relieved in its positions along the new line by elements of the 179th and 180th Infs and had assembled in ZITTERSHEIM (Q-7133) for recuperation and reorganization. Enemy activity on the entire division front was limited to patrolling by 15-20 man groups which were particularly active in the 179th Inf zone 94/.

3. There was no contact with the enemy in the 103d Division sector as the main elements withdrew to the ROTHBACH - NIEDERMODERN line on schedule, although unconfirmed reports indicated hostile patrols had followed up the withdrawal to reach MITSCHDORF (R-0339) by 0800A, WOERTH (R-0037) by 0900A and REICHSHOFFEN (Q-9537) by 1400A. As the period closed, the 410th Inf was improving positions along the ROTHBACH RAU between Q-842348 and Q-883289 while the 409th Inf was digging in along the ROTHBACH RAU and MODER River between Q-883289 and Q-938270. The 411th Inf had reverted to control of the 103d Division and assembled in the BOUXWILLER - KIRRWILLER area as reserve, while the 274th Inf (TF HERREN) in NIEDERSOULTZBACH prepared to move to the 45th Division sector the following morning as a division reserve until the 157th Inf could be reorganized 95/.

4. Employing CC "A" 14th Armd Division as a screening force, the 79th Division made an equally smooth withdrawal from its hazardous corner on the Northeast flank of the VI Corps sector, despite the icy condition of the roads which caused the loss enroute of several tracked vehicles. After successfully breaking contact along the entire line, all organic elements and the attached regiments of Task Force LINDEN closed on the new MLR during the morning without hostile interference, and by 1420A, the screening force of CC "A" had cleared through HAGUENAU and continued movement to the 14th Armd Division assembly area. The new MLR along the MODER River between NIEDERMODERN and BISCHWILLER, being firmly established by the 222d Inf, the 313th Inf, the 242d Inf and the 314th Inf, from West to East with outposts 1-3 kilometers to the front, was quiet throughout the day except for one strong hostile patrol action which drove in the outposts on the boundary of the 242d and 314th Infs in the BISCHWILLER area. The attached battalions of the 410th and 411th Infs moved to the 103d Division sector and reverted to parent control as the 232d Inf (TF LINDEN) was relieved of attachment to the 79th Division and assembled at BOSSENDORF (Q-8720) in Corps Reserve 96/.

5. On the Corps right flank the 36th Division remained in heavy contact throughout the day, as the enemy continued his strong probing action to find a weak spot through which he could pour his 10 SS Panzer Division supported by an infantry Division. At noon, a concentration of 15 hostile tanks put on a demonstration between the woods at R-0815 and R-0914 and seven of them were knocked out by 36th Division tank destroyers and artillery, and the rest driven off to the Northeast. At the same time approximately 12 tanks were observed heading Northwest from the bridge at R-087120 and were driven off before their infantry could join them. An

94/. WRJ, 21 Jan - Entries #11, 15, 48, 61, 74, 89 and 107.

95/. WRJ, 21 Jan - Entries #15, 49, 55 and 79; VIC O.I. No. 21 - Annex No. 7.

96/. WRJ, 21 Jan - Entries #12, 17, 33, 46, 78, 104 and 106.

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Authority 73517
By NARA Date 4

estimated 100 infantry infiltrated positions near KURTZENHAUSEN but were surrounded and being mopped up towards the close of the period. These probing actions by the enemy which cost him approximately 150 prisoners from the 21 and 22 PGRs, an estimated 250 killed or wounded, and eight tanks destroyed had made no serious inroads on 36th Division positions. The 23d and 714th Tk Bns remained in positions supporting the division throughout the day, but late in the period began movement to the GOUGENHEIM area and reverted to control of the 12th Armd Division. The relief of the 143d Inf by the 142d Inf, which had commenced the previous night, was concluded by 2200A 97/.

6. After screening the withdrawal of the 79th Division CC "A" closed in the DETTWILLER area, to complete the assembly of the 14th Armd Division by late in the afternoon. Assembly of the 12th Armd Division in the HOCHFELDEN area was nearing completion late in the period when the 23d and 714th Tk Bns commenced movement to GOUGENHEIM 98/.

7. No enemy planes appeared over the Corps area during the day, and bad weather limited air activity in close support of VI Corps to one mission of eleven sorties which attacked the tank concentrations on the front of the 36th Division. Hostile artillery was extremely light during the period, apparently indicating the enemy's scanty knowledge of Corps positions on the left and center of the zone, although some fire fell in HAGUENAU and BISCHWILLER. Corps artillery was generally concentrated on the hostile activity on the 36th Division front.

8. At 2300A, Operations Instruction No. 21 was issued outlining the plans for defense along the new MLR by the three infantry divisions on the line, designating reserves to be prepared for quick movement to any threatened sector, and directing continued reconnaissance of positions and routes to the HAGUENAU Switch Position and the VOSGES Position 99/.

9. Seventh Army Operations Instructions Nos. 66 and 67 were received. No. 66 directed that movement of the 141st RCT (36th Div) to the VI Corps sector would begin prior to 230001A; No. 67 relieved the 12th Armd Division from attachment to VI Corps in position, but authorized the Corps Commander to employ its organic artillery until the division received orders to move to the II French Corps area to the Southeast 100/.

22 January

1. Contact along the entire VI Corps front was generally light throughout 22 January, although patrols and air OPs observed a fairly rapid and very heavy follow-up of our withdrawal on both flanks where the enemy had his more mobile forces concentrated. The bulk of the hostile movement appeared headed for the ZINSWILLER area, where a heavy build-up was taking place near the boundary of the 45th and 103d Divisions, and for the OBERHOFFEN - BISCHWILLER area on the right flank of the 79th Division. While patrols made some light contact in scattered areas, the main activity of Corps troops throughout the period was the continued improvement of defenses against the impending renewed offensive of the enemy.

2. With the withdrawal of the main forces of the 45th Division completed and the new MLR well established the previous day, the screening elements were drawn in during the early hours of 22 January. Heavy hostile movement was picked up by air

97/. WRJ, 21 Jan - Entries #10, 15, 28, 82, 86, 103, 109 and 110.

98/. WRJ, 21 Jan - Entries #25, 39, 66 and 111.

99/. Annex No. 7.

100/. Annex No. 9

DECLASSIFIED
Authority 735017
By NARA, Date 4

OPs on the BAERENTHAL - ZINSWILLER road indicating the enemy intended to follow up as quickly as his transportation would allow and continue his offensive action on this front, but contact remained light throughout this period. The brief lull gave the 45th Division a good opportunity to regroup and consolidate the new line running from ALTHORN to ROTHBACH along the high ground South of the WILDENGUTH - REIPERTSWILLER road. On the left flank, the 179th Inf maintained its new positions until relieved late in the period by the attached 274th Inf. The center and right flank were still held by the 180th Inf and the 36th Engr C Regt, while the 157th Inf began rehabilitation and refitting in reserve at ZITTERSHEIM, to recuperate from the heavy losses suffered on the eastern shoulder of the BITCHE salient. Hostile artillery was limited to scattered mortar and light artillery fire on forward elements and contact was limited to occasional patrol clashes 101/.

3. A similar calm existed throughout daylight hours on the front of the 103d Division between ROTHBACH and NIEDERMODERN, held by the 410th Inf on the left and the 409th Inf on the right as the 411th Inf remained in reserve at BOUXWILLER. The new MLR was consolidated and patrols pushed to the front with little contact before nightfall. However, activity increased after dark and there were indications that the enemy had followed up in strength, particularly on the left flank of the 410th Inf. Enemy infantry infiltrated from the Northwest behind the OPL in OFFWILLER (Q-8634) at 2030A and forced a withdrawal to ROTHBACH after a sharp fire fight. And at 2130A an estimated battalion of enemy infantry attacked from OFFWILLER but were beaten off by a counterattack. During the morning the 274th Inf had been relieved of attachment to the 103d Division and had moved to the 45th Division sector 102/.

4. In the 79th Division sector the 222d, 313th, 242d and 314th Inf Regts continued to hold their respective zones, each with two battalions in line and one in reserve, and consolidated positions along the MODER River from NIEDERMODERN to BISCHWILLER, while maintaining heavy patrols to the front. Contact during the morning was negligible, but a heavy enemy build-up was observed during the afternoon and evening in the OBERHOFFEN - BISCHWILLER area. Air OPs picked up heavy movements of infantry, tanks and horse-drawn artillery coming Southwest towards BISCHWILLER - the largest group being an estimated 200 vehicles on the southern fringe of the woods at R-1020. Late in the afternoon one battalion of the reserve 315th Inf was moved to MARIENTHAL (R-0620) and Co "C", 25th Tk Bn was attached to the 79th Division to replace Co "A", 827th TD Bn, which reverted to control of the 12th Armd Division 103/.

5. Although interrogation of prisoners on the front of the 36th Division and in the II French Corps to the South continued to indicate that the enemy intended launching an all-out attack on the Corps right flank, the 36th Division sector between BISCHWILLER and WEYERSHEIM remained generally quiet. While the 142d Inf maintained the line and consolidated its defensive positions, the 143d Inf regrouped in the rear and then moved into reserve positions in the vicinity of GRIES (R-0617), GEURDERTHEIM (R-0114) and BIETLENHEIM (R-0313) while the 117th Cav Rcn Sq patrolled the road net on the right flank, along the VI Corps - II French Corps boundary. Heavy hostile road movements were observed along the HERRLISHEIM - WEYERSHEIM road but contact with the enemy was light 104/.

6. The 14th Armd Division remained in Corps Reserve in the DETTWILLER area, as its 94th Cav Rcn Sq relieved the 92d Cav Rcn Sq along the Corps right boundary
12th Armd

101/. WRJ, 22 Jan - Entries #16, 18, 27, 32 and 42 (DETTWILLER CP); and #16, 46 and 65 (SAVERNE CP)

102/. WRJ, 22 Jan - Entries #1, 11, 21, 38 and 43 (DETTWILLER CP); and #13, 19, 48, 53 and 56 (SAVERNE CP).

103/. WRJ, 22 Jan - Entries #15, 20, 30, 33 and 40 (DETTWILLER CP) and #21, 29, 50 and 57 (SAVERNE CP).

104/. WRJ, 22 Jan - Entries #17, 19, 37 and 46 (DETTWILLER CP) and #8, 18, 49 and 61 (SAVERNE CP).

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Authority 735017
NARA, Date 4

and maintained a patrol screen between MARLENHEIM (Q-8103) and OLWISHEIM (Q-9511). The 12th Armd Division, with the 827th TD Bn and the 572d AAA AW Bn attached, was relieved from attachment to VI Corps and reverted to Army control at 0700A.

7. With the improved weather, four missions of fifty sorties were flown by XII TAC in close support of VI Corps. Three of the missions bombed and strafed enemy concentrations and movements in the area between SCHIRRHEIN (R-125225) and OBERHOFFEN with good results, while the fourth bombed and strafed hostile concentrations in the BITCHE area. No hostile planes appeared over the Corps area during the period.

8. At 2100A, Operations Instruction No. 22 was issued, designating the Commanding General, 35th AAA Brigade as VI Corps Security Commander, and directing immediate organization of defenses by all units in rear of division sectors and continuous security patrols to guard against enemy infiltrations or parachute drops. At 2200A, Operations Instruction No. 23 was issued, directing the 14th Armd Division to relieve elements of the 12th Armd Division maintaining a reconnaissance screen along the Corps right (S) boundary, and to reinforce fires of the 36th Division with its artillery 105/.

9. The VI Corps CP closed in DETTWILLER (Q-802172) and opened in SAVERNE (Q-727157) at 1330A.

23 January

1. While the enemy appeared to be still closing up and regrouping for his threatened all-out offensive, and made no major attacks during 23 January his aggressive patrolling and heavier air activity seemed to indicate the time was getting closer. Definite identification of the 256 VG, 6 SS Mtn, 36 VG and 47 VG Divisions was made along the front between REIPERTSWILLER and HAGUENAU during the day and continued heavy road movements in rear areas indicated the build-up was continuing. While little hostile ground activity took place on the eastern flank in the BISCHWILLER - WEYERSHEIM area, strong air reconnaissance in that area indicated the importance the enemy placed in that sector. Throughout the day work continued on defensive positions along the south banks of ROTHBACH RAU and the MODER River in the sectors of all divisions in line.

2. The 45th Division sector remained generally quiet, although scattered enemy mortar and artillery fire fell on forward positions. Strong probing patrols into the enemy lines found that the 256 VG Division remained on this front, generally in the WILDENGUTH - REIPERTSWILLER area and that the 11 SS Mtn Regt was closing up on the right flank, indicating a southeastward shift of the 6 SS Mtn Division. After completing relief of the 179th Inf, the 274th Inf improved its defensive positions between Q-758401 and Q-779379. In the center and on the right flank of the Division sector, the 180th Inf and the 36th Engr C Regt continued to improve their positions along the high ground West of the REIPERTSWILLER - ROTHBACH road and maintained contact by patrolling. In view of the heavy hostile build-up in the ROTHBACH area, the 179th Inf (-2d Bn) was moved from assembly areas at WEINBOURG (Q-7830) and PUBERG (Q-6934) late in the period and took up new positions on the wooded ridges Southwest of ROTHBACH along the line Q-939349 - Q-804325, blocking to the East and prepared to counterattack against any enemy penetration of the left flank of the 103d Division to the East. The 157th Inf remained in Division Reserve and continued its reorganization and refitting. While contact along this entire front was light, considerable movement in the enemy rear areas indicated a substantial build-up 106/.

105/. Annex No. 7.

106/. WRJ, 23 Jan - Entries #10, 18, 39, 43, 53, 75, 96 and 126.

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Authority 735017
By NARA, Date 4

3. Enemy penetrations were made on the left flank of the 103d Division in the early morning hours before daylight, and a continued build-up of hostile forces took place on the right flank where the 87 GR of the German 36 VG Division was identified indicating that the entire division was in this area since the 118 GR had been identified near ZINSWILLER the previous day. After infiltrating behind the OPL of the 410th Inf in OFFWILLER during the night, elements of the 11 SS Mtn Regt had continued the attack at 0300A and seized ROTHBACH during the early morning and the left flank of the 410th Inf remained in heavy contact on the southern outskirts of the town throughout the period. While no major hostile effort developed in the sector of the 409th Inf on the division's right flank, heavy pressure of strong patrols forced a slight withdrawal of the OPL West of LA WALCK and BITSCHHOFFEN (Q-914287) where the 87 GR had been identified. Air OPs observed heavy troop and vehicle movements from OBERBRONN to ZINSWILLER and other troop concentrations were reported later in MEITERSHEIM (Q-9331) and BITSCHHOFFEN, on the front of the 409th Inf, and in OFFWILLER on the front of the 410th. Meanwhile the 411th Inf remained in Division Reserve in the general vicinity of BOUXWILLER 107/.

4. Strong hostile patrol activity flared up on the front of the 79th Division during the day as the enemy appeared to be probing for a spot through which to make a major armored thrust. Identification of both the 103 and 104 GRs in the area Northwest of HAGUENAU seemed to locate the entire 47 VG Division in that zone. On the left flank of the 79th Division sector, strong enemy patrol action had forced a withdrawal of the OPL by 0800A, but the 222d Inf continued to push aggressive patrols across the MODER River on its front, to the Northwest of HAGUENAU. The 313th Inf encountered several platoon sized enemy patrols in the HAGUENAU area and to the North of the town dispersed one 20-man patrol led by an officer. Similarly heavy patrol actions occurred on the fronts of both the 242d and 314th Infs between HAGUENAU and BISCHWILLER throughout the period. The main forces of all four regiments in line continued to improve their defenses along the south bank of the MODER as the 315th Inf remained in Division Reserve 108/.

5. Although the enemy continued his heavy build-up East of the Zorn River ground activity on the front of the 36th Division was limited to several sharp fire fights resulting from enemy patrol activities. At 1500A, 40 enemy infantry were dispersed when they attacked an outpost position of the 142d Inf at R-088166, and shortly after dark a 20-man patrol probing positions at R-104183 was driven off. However, the importance attached to this sector by the enemy seemed borne out when he concentrated his day's air effort in the triangle formed by BISCHWILLER, BRUMATH and WEYERSHEIM, where 21 planes bombed and strafed the 36th Division areas between 0930A and 1430A. The 142d Inf continued to hold this divisional front throughout the day, until elements of the 143d took over positions on the extreme right flank at 2120A 109/.

6. The 14th Armd Division remained in Corps Reserve in the DETTWILLER area, and the 94th Cav Rcn Sq continued its screening mission along the Corps right boundary. The 232d Inf remained assembled as reserve in BOSSENDORF (Q-8720), and the 141st Inf (36th Inf Div) completed movement to this zone at 1000A and reverted to Corps control as additional reserve in MONSWILLER (Q-7317). The 36th Rcn Tr, 131st FA Bn and Co A, 636th TD Bn were relieved of attachment to the 141st Inf and reverted to control of the 36th Division.

7. Before snowfall in the afternoon made visibility zero and grounded allied planes, three missions of 37 sorties had been flown by XII TAC in close support of

107/. WRJ, 23 Jan - Entries #19, 52, 63, 71, 98 and 112.

108/. WRJ, 23 Jan - Entries #11, 20, 38, 62, 67, 92, 107 and 127.

109/. WRJ, 23 Jan - Entries #13, 32, 50, 61, 72, 101, 108, 110 and 130.

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Authority 73017
By NARA, Date 4

VI Corps operations. The first mission bombed and strafed enemy concentrations in OBERHOFFEN with good results, while the other two bombed and strafed hostile concentrations and movements heading Southeast from BITCHE. Of the 21 hostile planes which concentrated on bombing, strafing and reconnaissance missions on the front of the 36th Division, an estimated half of them were Me-262s (jet-propelled), one of which was hit and probably destroyed by the 35th AAA Brigade. Hostile artillery was light, seeming to indicate that forward displacement had not been completed as yet. Corps artillery concentrated on heavy hostile movements on the MERTZWILLER - ESBACH and the BAERENTHAL - ZINSWILLER roads.

8. Seventh Army Operations Instruction No. 69 of this date was received, shifting the boundary between XV Corps and VI Corps slightly to the Southeast. As changed, the new left boundary of VI Corps ran generally from WINGEN (Q-740355) to WILDENGUTH (Q-785378) and Northeast 110/.

9. At 1900A, Operations Instruction No. 24 was issued, directing (a) the 103d, 79th and 36th (-) Infantry Divisions to continue their present defensive missions; (b) the 14th Armd Division to prepare plans to counterattack against enemy penetrations in the sectors of the 79th, 36th, 103d Divisions or the 3d DIA (II Fr Corps); (c) the 232d Inf Regt to prepare plans for a counterattack against enemy penetrations in the sectors of the 103d or 79th Divisions, and (d) the 141st Inf Regt to prepare plans to counterattack against enemy penetrations in the sectors of the 36th Division, 3 DIA or the 79th Division 111/.

10. At 2200A, Operations Instruction No. 25 was issued, outlining the plan for relief of the 45th Division left flank elements by the 35th Division (XV Corps) and directing the 45th Division to relieve the 36th Engr C Regt which would then revert to Corps control 112/.

24 January

1. Although the threatened attack in the OBERHOFFEN - BISCHWILLER area had not yet developed, the enemy applied increasing pressure along other parts of the Corps front during 24 January, and succeeded in making some penetrations - on the left flank of the 103d Division, and on the left flank of the 79th Division. The offensive in that latter area appeared the more serious inasmuch as an estimated hostile regiment succeeded in crossing the MODER River and penetrating about a kilometer through the heavy woods North of OHLUNGEN, where heavy fighting was raging at the close of the period.

2. There was little activity and only minor changes in dispositions on the front of the 45th Division, as the enemy continued to send strong patrols into our line to determine the extent of the withdrawal on this flank. Hostile patrols of 15-20 men were particularly active on the front of the 274th Inf, Northwest of WILDENGUTH, where several sharp small arms clashes took place during the day before XV Corps elements relieved the 274th Inf, as the VI Corps left boundary was shifted to the Southeast in accordance with Seventh Army Operations Instruction No. 69. In the center of the division sector, a group of 50-75 enemy forced a slight withdrawal of the 180th Inf OPL in the vicinity of SAEGMUHL at 0740A, but friendly patrols entered the same town in the evening without making contact. The 36th Engr C Regt continued to maintain the regimental right flank along the REIPERTSWILLER - ROTHBACH road without incident, while the 179th Inf remained in its blocking positions along the ridge Northwest of ROTHBACH, prepared to counter-

110/. Annex No. 9.

111/. Annex No. 7.

112/. Annex No. 7.

DECLASSIFIED
Authority 735017
By NARA, Date

attack against any enemy penetrations of the 103d Division flank in that area. In reserve, the 157th Inf continued its reorganization and rehabilitation program near ZITTERSHEIM 113/.

3. Increased hostile activity took place along the front of the 103d Division, and from the nature of the probing attacks, it appeared that the enemy was getting set to launch a strong offensive the next day. The 6 SS Mtn Division and the 36 VG Division continued to face the 410th and 409th Infs respectively and although no close-in contact with armor developed, the presence of tanks in ROTHBACH and PW statements indicated that elements of the 25 Panzer Division might be assembling on this front as well. Shortly after daybreak positions of the 410th Inf in BISCHOLTZ (Q-8532) and MUHLHAUSEN (Q-8631) were attacked by an estimated 50 and 100 men respectively. Both assaults were quickly dispersed but sniper activity continued in both towns where the enemy continued to build up his forces by infiltration in small groups. Artillery and tank destroyers concentrated their fires on a dozen armored vehicles in ROTHBACH and along the roads leading Northeast and Southeast of the town, and knocked out four of them. On the division right flank no close-in contact developed on the front of the 409th Inf, but hostile concentrations forming up for attack in the woods East of BISCHHOFFEN were twice dispersed by artillery fire. The 411th Inf remained in Division Reserve 114/.

4. After a relatively quiet day during which the four regiments on line in the 79th Division sector continued to improve positions along the south banks of the MODER River, the enemy became sharply aggressive about 2000A. Elements of the 47 VG and the 25 Panzer Divisions launched what seemed to be the start of a major attack between NEUBOURG and SCHWEIGHAUSEN in the zone of the 222d Inf. During the morning, patrols of the 222d Inf had made contact at the NEUBOURG station, and during the afternoon, the regimental left flank, to the West of NEUBOURG was taken under heavy small arms and automatic weapons fire by enemy infantry dug in along the railroad tracks across the MODER River. After dark, the enemy laid down a half-hour concentration of artillery, mortar and small arms fire in this same zone and then attacked across the MODER River at Q-959269 but made no serious penetrations, although heavy fighting was still in progress at the close of the period. A similar minor crossing at Q-990257 was quickly repulsed, but a simultaneous attack across the river at Q-976263 in estimated regimental strength broke through the MLR and penetrated through the woods North of OHLUNGEN to Q-975245. The rest of the Division front - held by the 313th, 242d and 314th Infs - East along the MODER River to OBERHOFFEN remained quiet except for occasional small arms and long-range machine gun fire on front line positions during the evening - apparently intended to distract attention from the river crossings to the Northwest. During the evening, the 314th Inf was relieved by the 315th Inf on the right flank, and moved to reserve assembly areas in the WINTERSHOUSE - HOCHSTETT area 115/.

5. Except for occasional minor patrol clashes and scattered light artillery in the WEYERSHEIM area, the front of the 36th Division held by the 1st and 3d Bns 142d Inf and the 3d Bn 143d Inf, remained quiet. In his single bit of aggressive activity the enemy lost an entire nine-man patrol from the 21 Panzer Division when six were captured and three killed East of WEYERSHEIM. The 117th Cav Rcn Sq continued to maintain a screen along the right boundary of this sector.

6. There was no change in Corps reserve. The 14th Armd Division remained in the DETTWILLER area, the 141st Inf at MONSWILLER and the 232d Inf at BOSSENDORF.

113/. WRJ, 24 Jan - Entries #15, 22, 60, 66, 73, 85 and 97.

114/. WRJ, 24 Jan - Entries #19, 23, 28, 45, 47, 54, 61, 70, 72, 85, 93 and 96.

115/. WRJ, 24 Jan - Entries #24, 36, 53, 69, 86, 98, 101, 102, 107, 109 and 110.

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Authority 73017
By IM NARA, Date 4

7. Continued flurries of snow and poor visibility prevented any air activity in close support of Corps operations, and no hostile planes appeared over the area. Despite poor visibility which hampered observation, Corps artillery fired several successful shoots on hostile personnel concentrations, batteries, and armor in the ROTHBACH area. Hostile artillery was again limited to scattered harassing fires on frontline positions throughout the Corps area.

8. Seventh Army Operations Instruction No. 70 of this date was received directing the movement of the 101st Airborne Division (with 807th TD Bn atchd) into the VI Corps area, commencing 25 January, and the movement of the 79th Division (with 813th TD Bn and 463d AAA AW Bn atchd) out of the Corps area prior to 28 January. Subsequently, at 2300A, VI Corps Operations Instruction No. 26 was issued outlining the relief of the 79th Division and its movement to Army area 116/.

25 January

1. The renewal of the enemy's all-out offensive to retake ALSACE was in full stride during the early morning hours of 25 January as the bulk of six hostile divisions were concentrated for three strong coordinated attacks against the VI Corps MODER River line. The 6 SS Mtn Division broke through positions of the 410th Inf to take SCHILLERSDORF while the 36 VG Division put heavy pressure on the rest of the 103d Division front, but this attack had been contained by the end of the period and heavy losses inflicted on the attacking SS troops. Simultaneously the hostile assault across the MODER River and into the MLR of the 79th Division between NEUBOURG and SCHWEIGHAUSEN had been renewed by elements of the 47 VG, 25 PG and 7 Paratroop Divisions. After making good early progress in BOIS DE OHLUNGEN this attack had been halted and repulsed with heavy casualties to the enemy after CC "B" 14th Armd Division and the 232d Inf (Corps Reserve) had been committed to a counterattack. A third prong of the enemy offensive was the attack across the MODER at KALTENHAUSEN by the 10 SS Panzer Division. This drive was also halted and driven back by the right flank of the 79th Division after heavy casualties had been suffered by the attacking SS troops.

2. Except for his continued probing patrols, the enemy remained fairly quiet on the front of the 45th Division which was held by the 180th Inf and the 36th Engr C Regt. On the left flank, shortly after the start of the period, 180th Inf elements were forced to withdraw from SAEGMUHL which they had entered unopposed the previous evening, but this line was held intact as several 10-15 man patrols were easily repulsed through the rest of the period. Similar patrol activity took place on positions of the 36th Engrs during the morning but hostile activity in the afternoon was limited to harassing mortar and light artillery fire. While the 157th continued its reorganization and training program in reserve, the 179th Inf improved its defensive positions on the ridges Northwest of ROTHBACH, clearing roads, supply trails and routes for a counterattack against enemy penetrations which might threaten the division right flank. After dark, elements of the 274th Inf moved in between the sectors of the 180th Inf and the 36th Engrs, relieving the 2d Bns of each, on the line 117/.

3. The left flank of the 410th Inf continued to bear the brunt of the enemy offensive, although troops along the entire front of the 103d Division remained in heavy contact throughout the period. After exerting increasing pressure in the MUHLHAUSEN area throughout the night, at least one battalion of the 12th SS Mtn

116/. Annexes Nos. 7 and 9.

117/. WRJ, 25 Jan - Entries #23, 26, 39, 61, 63, 66, 91, 100 and 113.

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Regt (6 SS Mtn Div) attacked Southwest with heavy automatic weapons fire and strong SP gun fire support to reach SCHILLERSDORF before daylight. Subsequent attacks by the estimated 200 hostile paratroopers who had reached the town were broken up by artillery concentrations at 0630A and 0955A, but a counter-attack at 1030A by 410th Inf elements supported by tanks made only fair progress in its attempts to clear the town. After heavy house-to-house fighting in SCHILLERSDORF throughout the day, the enemy force had been confined to the southeastern corner of the town, and elements of the 411th Inf had reestablished MLR positions of the 410th Inf between MUHLHAUSEN and SCHILLERSDORF and had set up road blocks to the South of the town to meet any more attacks of this SS Mtn force. At 0830A another estimated 100 enemy infantry had hit the right flank of the 410th Inf in NIEFFERN, and though halted by artillery fire remained in the town, harassing front line positions with small arms fire. Late in the period another battalion of the 12 SS Mtn Regt had seized the high ground West of MUHLHAUSEN. On the Division right flank, an estimated 200 enemy infantry of the 36 VG Division, supported by several tanks, attacked the 409th Inf OPL in the vicinity of KINDWILLER (Q-9029) at 0600A and, though repulsed after heavy fighting, maintained enough pressure throughout the day to force a withdrawal to the MLR 118/.

4. a. The heavy enemy pressure exerted on the 79th Division's left flank during the previous period increased, seeming to indicate that this attack over the MODER River between NEUBOURG and SCHWEIGHAUSEN was his long-expected major effort. Elements of both the 103 and 104 GRs of the 47 VG Division were identified at NEUBOURG, both the 119 and the 35 PGRs of 21 Panzer Division in the BOIS DE OHLUNGEN and 21 Para Regt of the 7 Paratroop Division in SCHWEIGHAUSEN. After heavy penetrations through the 222d Inf MLR and into the BOIS DE OHLUNGEN had been made during the night, principally by infantry troops of the 21 Panzer Division, both the 1st and 3d Bns 314th Inf joined the 222d Inf counterattack at 0530A to clear out this salient. And at 0830A both the 232d Inf (Corps Reserve) and CC "B" 14th Armd Division had been attached to the 79th Division to repulse and drive this hostile force back across the MODER. On the West, the 3d Bn 314th and the 1st Bn 222d Inf attacking East and Northeast through the woods, had cleared the area as far as Q-972255 after a day of heavy fighting. After assembling at Q-990249, CC "B" attacked Northwest to clear the hostile infantry from the woods before enemy armor could be brought across the river, and by the close of the period the BOIS DE OHLUNGEN had been cleared except for scattered pockets. Meanwhile, the 1st Bn 314th Inf and the 2d Bn 232d Inf had joined the 2d Bn 222d Inf near SCHWEIGHAUSEN and after a day of heavy fighting had cleared the town by 2130A except for a few scattered snipers left behind by the 21 Para Regt. More than 100 prisoners were taken from the three enemy divisions participating in this attack, and an estimated 200-300 were killed.

b. While the sectors of the 313th Inf in HAGUENAU and the 315th Inf on the division right flank near OBERHOFFEN and BISCHWILLER remained relatively quiet throughout the day, the enemy launched another heavy attack across the MODER, East of HAGUENAU against the 242d Inf in the KALTENHAUSEN area. This offensive, spearheaded by two battalions of both the 21 and 22 SS PGRs of the 10 SS Panzer Division, made some early progress in its apparent mission of seizing Hill 150 (R-060222), but a counterattack by the 242d Inf succeeded in clearing out this pocket before the reserve battalion of the 315th Inf had to be committed. Although statements by prisoners that the 10 SS Panzer Division had suffered 1000 casualties in this action appeared exaggerated the effort to establish a bridgehead across the MODER in this sector was extremely costly to the enemy, particularly to the II and III Bns 21 SS PGR 119/.

118/. WRJ, 25 Jan - Entries #12, 16, 40, 43, 56, 66, 71, 84, 94, 108, 110, 112, 114 and 120.

119/. WRJ, 25 Jan - Entries #8, 9, 10, 13, 32, 36, 41, 42, 48, 50, 53, 55, 62, 66, 67, 70, 99, 100, 115, 116, 118 and 121.

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Authority 73517
By IM NARA, Date 4

5. The zone of the 36th Division on the Corps right flank, between BISCHWILLER and WEYERSHEIM, remained quiet throughout the period, the single bit of hostile activity being a ten-man patrol observed at R-098193, North of BISCHWILLER at 0900A. Late in the period, the 1st Bn 142d Inf relieved the 1st Bn 143d in the center of the front, while the 3d Bns, 142d and 143d Infs remained on the line to the North and South. The 117th Cav Rcn Sq continued to screen the Corps right boundary and maintain contact with elements of the II French Corps to the South 120/.

6. The 14th Armd Division (-CC "B") remained in Corps Reserve in the DETTWILLER area. The 101st Airborne Division began movement to the VI Corps sector and by the close of the period the 501st Prcht Inf and the 327th Glider Regt had assembled in the HOCHFELDEN area.

7. Heavy snow prevented any close air support, and also grounded all hostile air activity. The ensuing poor visibility prevented the use of Air OPs, but Corps artillery fired several successful concentrations on close-in targets against the heavy attacks on the fronts of the 103d and 79th Divisions. While a short preparation was fired by enemy artillery before the attack on SCHILLERSDORF, and the NEUBOURG - SCHWEIGHAUSEN front was subjected to sporadic harassing fire, enemy artillery continued light throughout the period.

8. At 2300A, Operations Instruction No. 27 was issued (a) suspending so much of O.I. No. 26 which had directed the relief of the 79th Division by the 101st Airborne Division, (b) directing the 101st Airborne Division to relieve elements of the 79th Division along the MODER River between NIEDERMODERN and SCHWEIGHAUSEN, and (c) attaching the 232d Inf Regt and CC "B", 14th Armd Division to the 79th Division 121/.

26 January

1. The VI Corps front during 26 January was as quiet as it had been active the previous day. Apparently, our counterattacks against the enemy penetrations to SCHILLERSDORF on the 103d Division front and against his offensive which had carried across the MODER River into the BOIS DE OHLUNGEN on the front of the 79th Division had inflicted heavy casualties on the 6 SS Mtn, 36 VG, 47 VG, 25 FG, 7 Paratroop and 10 SS Panzer Divisions, for the MLR was easily restored during the morning and there was only minor hostile activity throughout the entire period. There were indications that the enemy might have abandoned his ideas of continuing an all-out offensive to retake ALSACE, and might be shifting to the defensive.

2. On the Corps left flank, the 45th Division sector remained extremely quiet as enemy activity was limited to occasional bursts of light artillery and mortar fire on front line positions. From West to East along the ridges South of the REIPERTSWILLER - ROTHBACH road, the 180th Inf, the 274th Inf and the 36th Engr C Regt continued to improve their positions on the MLR while the 179th maintained its line blocking to the East on the Division right flank. The reorganization, refitting and training program of the 157th Inf continued in rear areas 122/.

3. In the sector of the 103d Division, the enemy salient which had been pushed into positions of the 410th Inf and taken SCHILLERSDORF was completely eliminated during the day. Some of the remaining 100 troops of the 12 SS Mtn

120/. WRJ, 25 Jan - Entries #31, 66 and 117.

121/. Annex No. 7.

122/. WRJ, 26 Jan - Entries #8, 35, 45, 60, 75 and 81.

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Authority 73517
By NARA, Date 4

Regt who had been surrounded within the town the day before, had managed to infiltrate back to their own lines during the night, but the majority were either captured or killed and the town had been completely cleared by 1115A. An estimated 25-30 hostile paratroopers remained in BISCHHOLTZ and a few snipers harassed the 410th Inf front line elements near MUHLHAUSEN and NIEFFERN throughout the day, but the regimental MLR had been completely restored and remained comparatively inactive throughout the period. The right flank of the 103d Division, held by the 409th Inf, remained quiet and there were no further demonstrations by the German 36 VG Division in this zone 123/.

4. The heavy casualties inflicted by our counterattack on 25 January apparently had caused the enemy to withdraw what he could from his penetration in the BOIS DE OHLUNGEN and back across the MODER River during the night. The mopping up operations by elements of the 314th and 232d Infs and the 68th AIB met only scattered resistance from isolated pockets of Germans left in the woods and scattered machine gun fire from North of the river. Approximately 300 enemy dead were found through these woods and more than 100 prisoners taken, the majority from the 20 and 21 Para Regts, and the 103 GR, and the MLR along the south banks of the MODER had been restored by 1030A. By noon the 68th AIB had been relieved in line, and CC "B" commenced movement back to the 14th Armd Division area, closing in WITTERSHEIM at 1545A and reverting to parent unit control. The restored MLR was held by the 2d Bn 222d Inf, the 1st and 3d Bns 314th Inf and the 2d Bn 232d Inf until after dark when these battalions were completely relieved by the 501st Prcht Inf and the 327th Glider Inf of the 101st Airborne Division. The rest of the 103d Division front from SCHWEIGHAUSEN to BISCHWILLER - held by the 313th, 242d and 315th Infs - became inactive once more 124/.

5. By 2100A the remaining elements of the 101st Airborne Division had closed in the general HOCHFELDEN area, attached to VI Corps on arrival. Although the 501st Prcht Inf and the 327th Glider Inf, each with two battalions in line and one in reserve - had taken over the front from SCHWEIGHAUSEN to the left boundary of the 103d Division, control of this sector had not yet passed to the 101st Airborne Division Commander at the close of the period 125/.

6. A continued lull existed over the front of the 36th Division on the Corps right flank where enemy activity was limited to several small patrols and a few bursts of light and medium artillery fire on BISCHWILLER. Night patrols of the 142d Inf elements holding the left hinge in the BISCHWILLER area pushed out to the East to R-125178, R-126186 and R-115188 without making contact. The rest of the front was maintained by the 143d Inf, with the 117th Cav Rcn Sq still screening the Corps right boundary 126/.

7. Seventh Army Operations Instruction No. 72 of this date was received, rescinding so much of O.I. No. 70 which had directed the detachment and movement of the 79th Infantry Division from the VI Corps zone, and directing instead the movement of Task Force LINDEN (222d, 232d and 242d Inf Regts) from the VI Corps sector on 27 January 127/.

8. At 1700A, VI Corps Operations Instruction No. 28 was issued, directing (a) the 101st Airborne Division to relieve immediately elements of Task Force LINDEN and the 79th Division along the MODER River Line, generally between

123/. WRJ, 26 Jan - Entries #5, 8, 24, 32, 43, 45, 58 and 76.

124/. WRJ, 26 Jan - Entries #8, 23, 27, 38, 45, 61, 65, 77 and 82.

125/. WRJ, 26 Jan - Entries #54 and 89.

126/. WRJ, 26 Jan - Entries #4, 8, 45, 66 and 78.

127/. Annex No. 9.

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Authority 735017
By NARA, Date

NIEDERMODERN and SCHWEIGHAUSEN, (b) the 79th Division to relieve elements of Task Force LINDEN in sector by 280800A, (c) the relief of the 59th Armd FA Bn and the 242d FA Bn from attachment to the 79th Division and their attachment to the 101st Airborne Division, (d) the 14th Armd Division and the 141st Inf to revise their counterattack plans to include sector of the 101st Airborne Division, and (e) all divisions to institute a vigorous program of night patrolling to determine enemy strength, dispositions and identifications 128/.

9. At 2100A, Operations Instruction No. 29 was issued FOR PLANNING PURPOSES ONLY, directing (a) the 36th Division to attack and seize the line OBERHOFFEN - DRUSENHEIM and clear the enemy from the west bank of the RHINE to the South thereof, in sector, and (b) the other four infantry divisions to conduct limited objective attacks to restore OPIR in sector 129/.

27 January

1. Continued quiet characterized the VI Corps front during 27 January, indicating perhaps that the enemy was regrouping his forces after the heavy losses suffered by his five first class divisions in the heavy offensive of 24 - 25 January. Work continued on the improvement of the restored MLR positions on the Corps front, as patrols made only scattered contact in their probing attempts to determine whether the enemy intended withdrawals of the bulk of his crack divisions or was merely regrouping for another attack. Early in the period, the 101st Airborne Division had assumed control of its new sector, formerly the left half of the 79th Division zone.

2. On the Corps left flank, the 45th Division continued to maintain and improve its defensive positions between Q-790380 and Q-845346 with the 180th Inf, 274th Inf and the 36th Engr C Regt holding the MLR and the 179th Inf on the right flank, blocking to the East from the high ground West of ROTHBACH. The few prisoners taken by patrols were from the 476 GR, indicating that the 256 VG Division was still holding this sector. However, the enemy remained inactive on this front and night patrols pushed more than a mile across the REIPERTSWILLER - ROTHBACH road and through the high ground to the Northeast without encountering wire, mines or occupied enemy positions. In Division Reserve, the 157th Inf continued its reorganization and training program 130/.

3. Except on the northwest flank, between ROTHBACH and MUHLHAUSEN, the enemy remained inactive on the front of the 103d Division, as defensive positions were improved by the 410th and 409th Infs holding the line, and strong patrols were pushed into hostile territory. A few brief small arms fights took place throughout the day in ROTHBACH where elements of the 12 SS Mtn Regt remained, and at dusk an enemy 20-man patrol attempting to infiltrate positions near BISCHHOLTZ was repulsed with heavy casualties. The approximate dozen prisoners - half of them holed up in SCHILLERSDORF - taken during the day were all from the 12 SS Mtn Regt 131/.

4. After completing the relief of 79th Division and Task Force LINDEN elements by the 501st Prcht Inf and the 327th Glider Inf, the 101st Airborne Division Commander assumed control of the sector along the MODER River between Q-938272 and R-007246 at 0145A. While small enemy groups were observed digging in along the North bank of the MODER and some harassing light artillery was

128/. Annex No. 7.

129/. Annex No. 7.

130/. WRJ, 27 Jan - Entries #14, 19, 30, 34, 46 and 60.

131/. WRJ, 27 Jan - Entries #9, 19, 21, 34, 35, 49, 63 and 66.